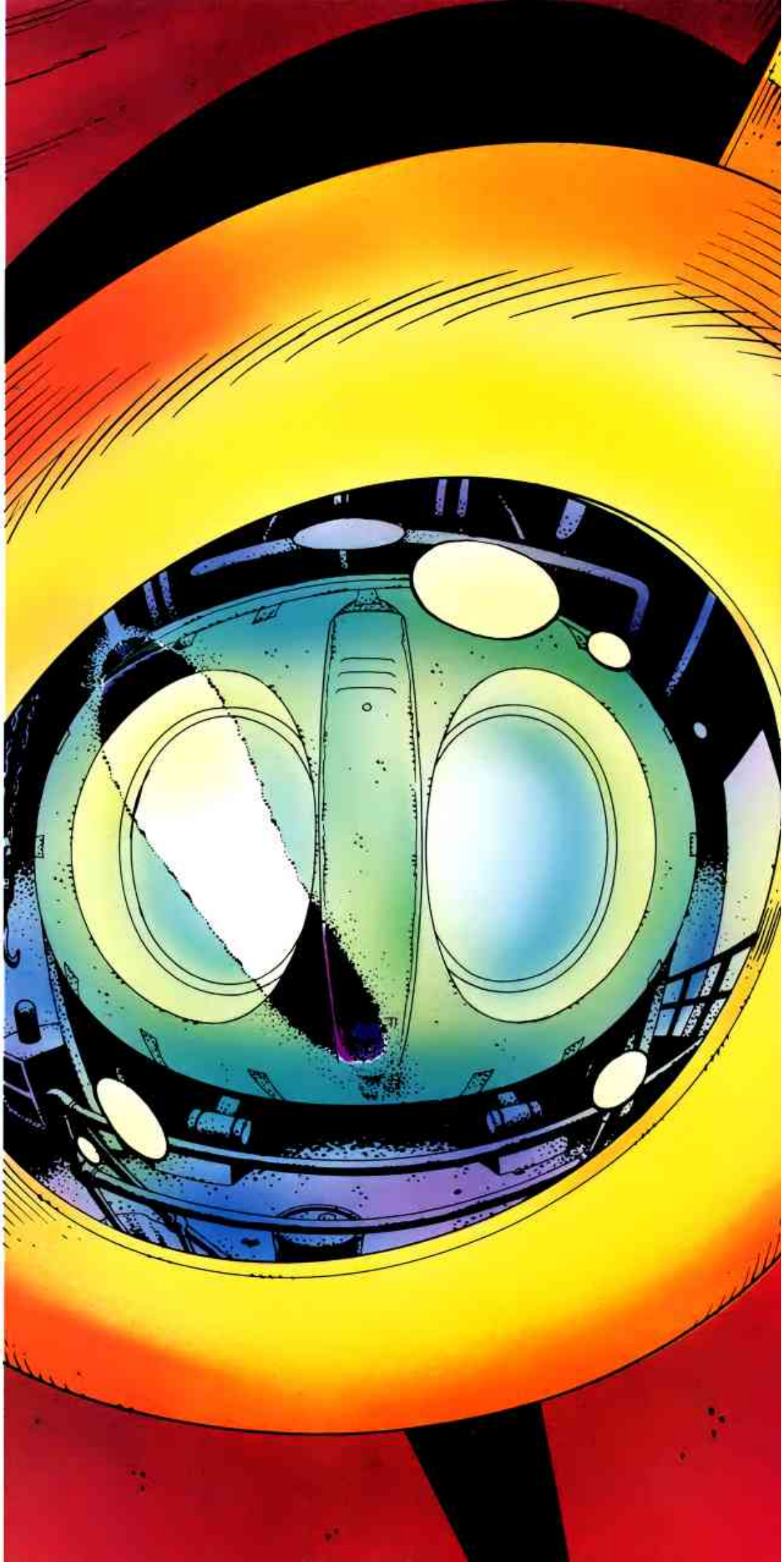
WATCHMEN
No. 7 of 12 $1.50 $2.10/CAN.

WATCHMEN



MARCH 1987

WATCHMEN 7
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DC Comics Inc.
666 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10103
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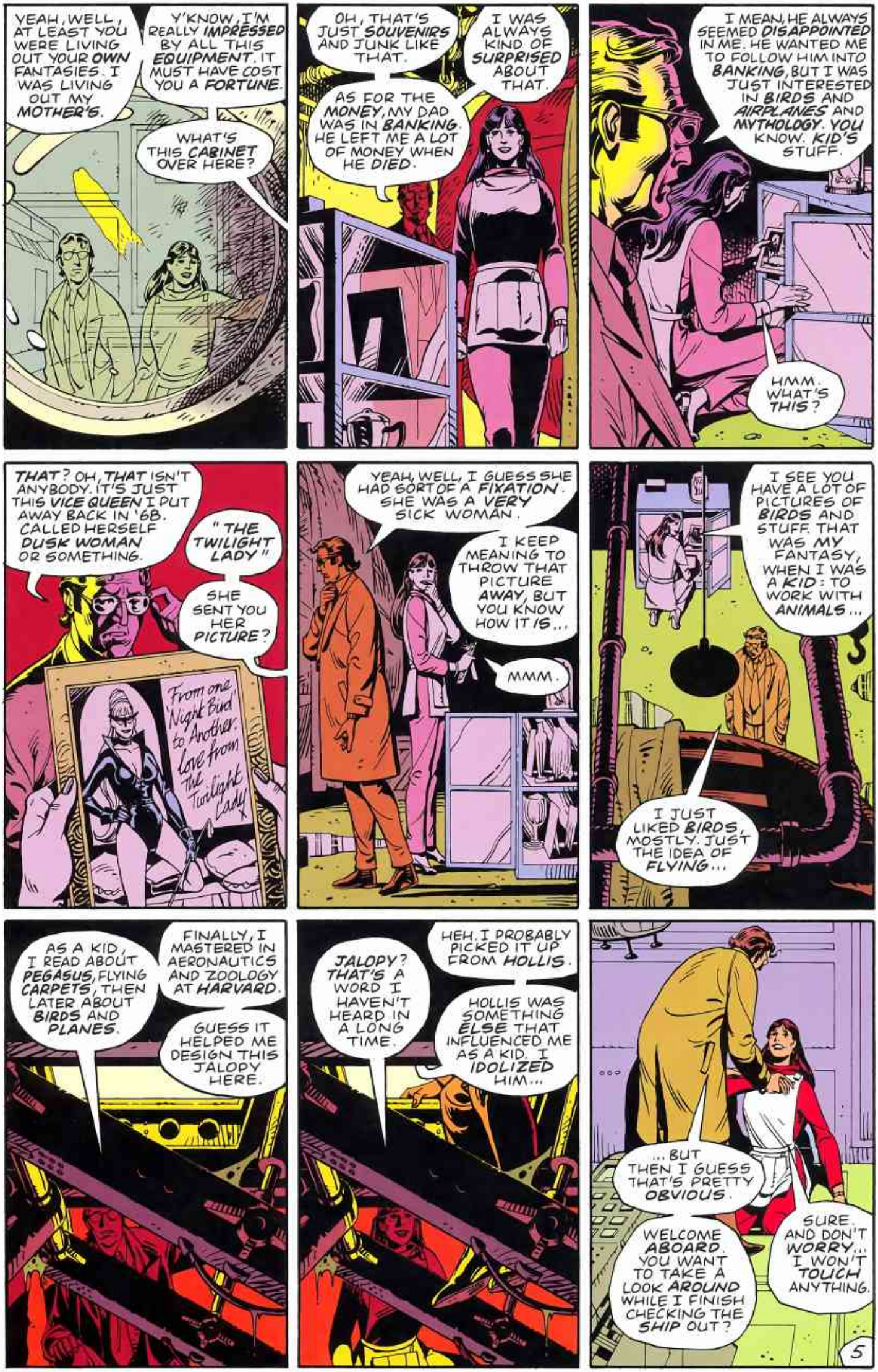
A BROTHER TO DRAGONS

LAURIE? DID YOU SHOUT?
EVERYTHING OKAY DOWN THERE?
MAYBE.
OR MAYBE SOMEONE'S PICKING OFF COSTUMED HEROES.
OH, GOD.
LAURIE?
LAURIE, HANG ON, I'M COMING!
THE COMEDIAN MURDERED. DR. MANHATTAN EXILED.
TWO OF US GONE, ALL WITHIN A WEEK.
WHO NEXT? VEIDT? JUSPECZYK? ME?
YOU?
LAURIE?
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS! WHERE THE HELL ARE THE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS?
3

OVER HERE.
LAURIE, WHAT HAPPENED? I THOUGHT...
LOOK, I'M REALLY SORRY. I WAS JUST POKING AROUND DOWN HERE. I SAW THE LIGHTS ON IN THE SHIP...
SEE, I WAS LOOKING FOR THE DASH LIGHTER...
I DON'T SMOKE. THAT WAS THE FLAME-THROWER.
YEAH, WELL, I KNOW THAT NOW. LOOK, DAN, I'M REALLY SORRY...
HEY, IT'S OKAY. MY FAULT. I WAS DOWN HERE CHECKING OUT THE SYSTEMS EARLIER. I LEFT EVERYTHING SWITCHED ON WHEN I WENT OUT TO THE STORE.
YOU'RE NOT HURT?
ME? I'M FINE... BUT LOOK AT YOUR BEAUTIFUL SHIP...
AHH, THAT'S MOSTLY JUST SOOT. IT'LL WIPE OFF. I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE OKAY.
WHEN YOU SCREAMED, I THOUGHT ... WELL, Y'KNOW. EVER SINCE THE COMEDIAN DIED...
OH, COME ON, DAN... YOU'RE NOT STARTING TO TAKE RORSCHACH'S 'MASK KILLER' BULL-SHIT SERIOUSLY?
I MEAN, HE'S PSYCHOTIC. TO HIM, EVERY-THING'S A CONSPIRACY.
I DON'T KNOW ...THE COMEDIAN MURDERED, JON EXILED, SOME-ONE TRIES TO SHOOT ADRIAN, RORSCHACH HIMSELF GETS TAKEN BY THE POLICE...
IT JUST MAKES ME FEEL UN-EASY.
IS THAT WHY YOU WERE TUNING YOUR SHIP?
WHAT? OH, NO, NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT. I WAS JUST TINKERING, YOU KNOW, NOTHING SERIOUS...
YOU'VE GOT SOME WONDERFUL STUFF DOWN HERE. IT'S LIKE A MAGICIAN'S CAVE OR SOME-THING...
WHAT, WITH ALL THESE LEAKS AND PUDDLES?
NO... MAYBE IT USED TO SEEM LIKE THAT TO ME ONCE, BUT THESE DAYS IT'S SORT OF AN EMBARRASSMENT.
LOOKING BACK IT ALL SEEMS SO ...WELL, CHILDISH, I GUESS.
JUST A SCHOOLKID'S FANTASY THAT GOT OUT OF HAND.
...ON REFLECTION.
THAT'S, Y'KNOW, WITH HINDSIGHT...
4


YEAH, WELL, AT LEAST YOU WERE LIVING OUT YOUR OWN FANTASIES. I WAS LIVING OUT MY MOTHER'S.
Y'KNOW, I'M REALLY IMPRESSED BY ALL THIS EQUIPMENT. IT MUST HAVE COST YOU A FORTUNE.
WHAT'S THIS CABINET OVER HERE?
OH, THAT'S JUST SOUVENIRS AND JUNK LIKE THAT.
I WAS ALWAYS KIND OF SURPRISED ABOUT THAT.
AS FOR THE MONEY, MY DAD WAS IN BANKING. HE LEFT ME A LOT OF MONEY WHEN HE DIED.
I MEAN, HE ALWAYS SEEMED DISAPPOINTED IN ME. HE WANTED ME TO FOLLOW HIM INTO BANKING, BUT I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND AIRPLANES AND MYTHOLOGY. YOU KNOW. KID'S STUFF.
HMM. WHAT'S THIS?
THAT? OH, THAT ISN'T ANYBODY. IT'S JUST THIS VICE QUEEN I PUT AWAY BACK IN '68. CALLED HERSELF DUSK WOMAN OR SOMETHING.
"THE TWILIGHT LADY"
SHE SENT YOU HER PICTURE?
From one Night Bird to Another. Love from The Twilight Lady
YEAH, WELL, I GUESS SHE HAD SORT OF A FIXATION. SHE WAS A VERY SICK WOMAN.
I KEEP MEANING TO THROW THAT PICTURE AWAY, BUT YOU KNOW HOW IT IS...
MMM.
I SEE YOU HAVE A LOT OF PICTURES OF BIRDS AND STUFF. THAT WAS MY FANTASY, WHEN I WAS A KID: TO WORK WITH ANIMALS...
I JUST LIKED BIRDS, MOSTLY. JUST THE IDEA OF FLYING...
AS A KID, I READ ABOUT PEGASUS, FLYING CARPETS, THEN LATER ABOUT BIRDS AND PLANES.
FINALLY, I MASTERED IN AERONAUTICS AND ZOOLOGY AT HARVARD.
GUESS IT HELPED ME DESIGN THIS JALOPY HERE.
JALOPY? THAT'S A WORD I HAVEN'T HEARD IN A LONG TIME.
HEH. I PROBABLY PICKED IT UP FROM HOLLIS.
HOLLIS WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT INFLUENCED ME AS A KID. I IDOLIZED HIM...
... BUT THEN I GUESS THAT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS.
WELCOME ABOARD. YOU WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND WHILE I FINISH CHECKING THE SHIP OUT?
SURE. AND DON'T WORRY... I WON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.
5

OH, HEY, LISTEN, I'M NOT WORRIED. THAT FLAME THROWER BUTTON CONFUSES EVERYBODY. THE COMEDIAN ALMOST DID THE SAME THING, BACK IN '77.
MM.
DAN, I'M SAFELY ON BOARD. YOU CAN LET GO OF MY HAND NOW.
OH. I'M SORRY. I, UH...
LISTEN, I'D BETTER CHECK OUT THE SHIP'S OTHER SYSTEMS. YOU, UH, YOU JUST TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
I LIKE THE DESIGN. ALL CURVES AND NO CORNERS.
WELL, UH, ACTUALLY, ALONG WITH THE CONCEALED VENTS AND TURBINES, HAVING NO CORNERS HELPS MAKE THE SHIP RADAR INVISIBLE.
HMM. THIS CHAIR CONTROL IS STICKING A LITTLE...
RADAR INVISIBLE? BOY, YOU REALLY HAVE ALL THIS STUFF FIGURED OUT, DON'T YOU?
WHAT'S THIS CLOSET HERE?
SPECIAL AUXILIARY COSTUMES. AH...THAT'S BETTER.
HEY, THESE ARE TERRIFIC. IT'S LIKE, WHEN I WAS SMALL, MOM GOT ME THIS G.I. JOE WITH ALL THESE NEAT LITTLE SPARE UNIFORMS.
WHAT'S THIS GREEN ONE?
UNDERWATER WORK. LET'S SEE ...FLAMERS FUNCTIONING, WATER CANNON FUNCTIONING...
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM AND SCREECHERS FUNCTIONING...
AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES FUNCTIONING...
FOG-SCREENS FUNCT...
AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES?
SURE. BUTTON RIGHT NEXT TO THE FLAME THROWER.
FOGSCREENS FUNCTIONING ... RADIATION SHIELDS FUNCTIONING...
THAT'S IT! THAT DOES IT! NO MORE SMOKING. I'M ALL THROUGH. I QUIT!
I MEAN, TALK ABOUT DANGEROUS HABITS...
6

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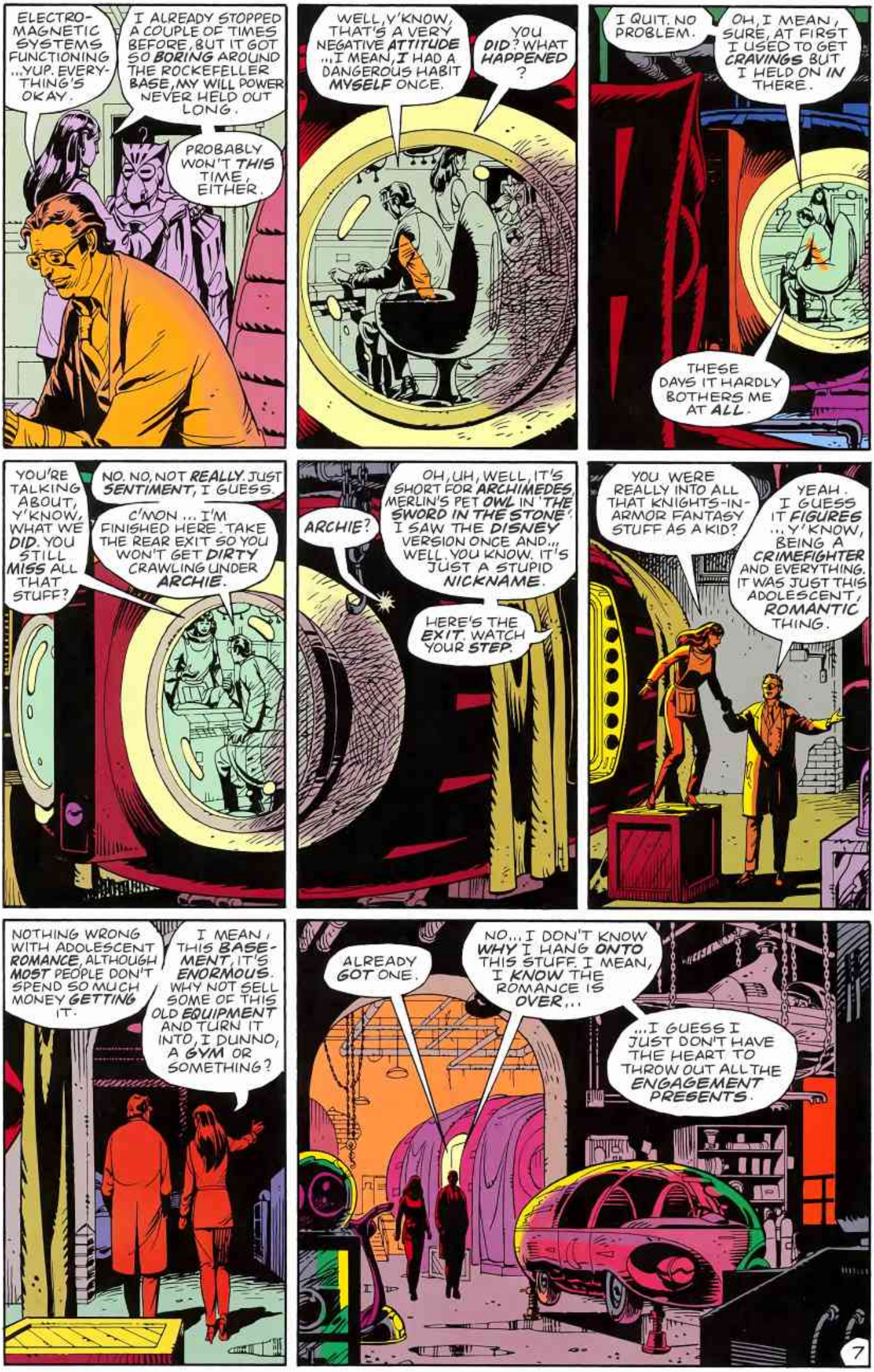
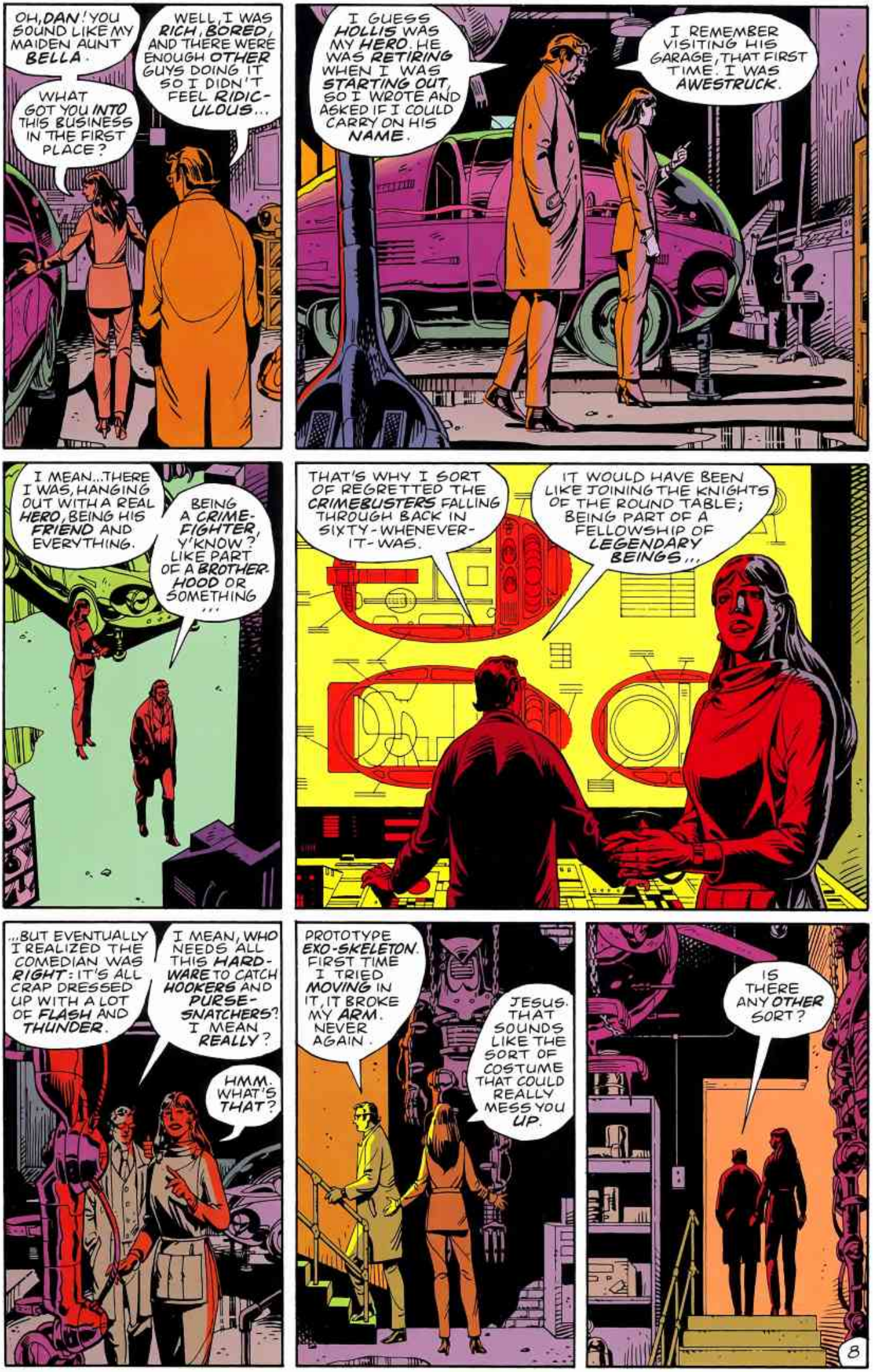
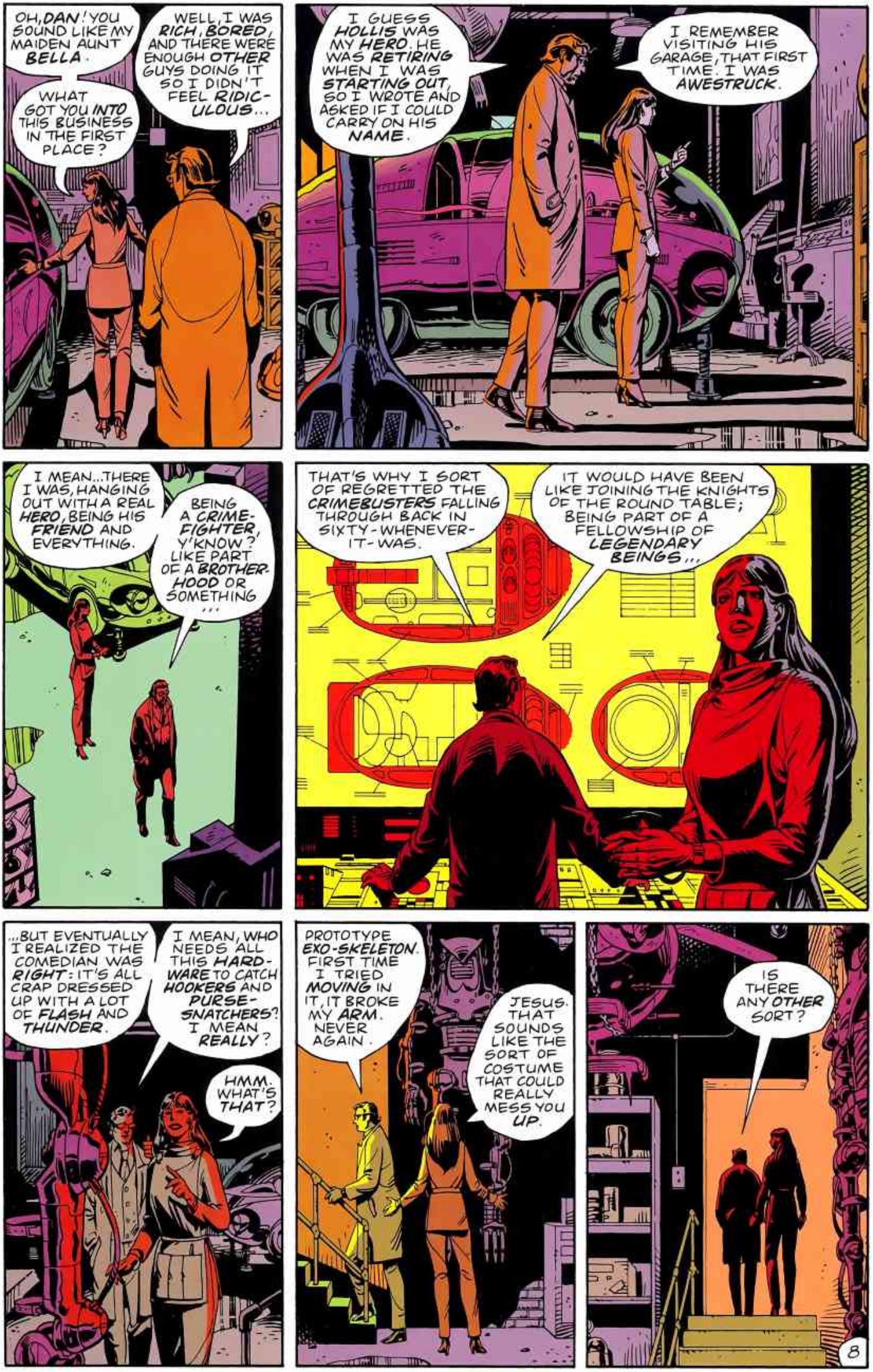

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SYSTEMS FUNCTIONING ...YUP. EVERY-THING'S OKAY.
I ALREADY STOPPED A COUPLE OF TIMES BEFORE, BUT IT GOT SO BORING AROUND THE ROCKEFELLER BASE, MY WILL POWER NEVER HELD OUT LONG.
PROBABLY WON'T THIS TIME, EITHER.
WELL, Y'KNOW, THAT'S A VERY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ...I MEAN, I HAD A DANGEROUS HABIT MYSELF ONCE.
YOU DID? WHAT HAPPENED ?
I QUIT. NO PROBLEM.
OH, I MEAN, SURE, AT FIRST I USED TO GET CRAVINGS BUT I HELD ON IN THERE.
THESE DAYS IT HARDLY BOTHERS ME AT ALL.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, Y'KNOW, WHAT WE DID. YOU STILL MISS ALL THAT STUFF?
NO. NO, NOT REALLY. JUST SENTIMENT, I GUESS.
C'MON ... I'M FINISHED HERE. TAKE THE REAR EXIT SO YOU WON'T GET DIRTY CRAWLING UNDER ARCHIE.
ARCHIE?
OH, UH, WELL, IT'S SHORT FOR ARCHIMEDES, MERLIN'S PET OWL IN 'THE SWORD IN THE STONE'. I SAW THE DISNEY VERSION ONCE AND... WELL, YOU KNOW. IT'S JUST A STUPID NICKNAME.
HERE'S THE EXIT. WATCH YOUR STEP.
YOU WERE REALLY INTO ALL THAT KNIGHTS-IN-ARMOR FANTASY STUFF AS A KID?
YEAH. I GUESS IT FIGURES ... Y'KNOW, BEING A CRIMEFIGHTER AND EVERYTHING. IT WAS JUST THIS ADOLESCENT, ROMANTIC THING.
NOTHING WRONG WITH ADOLESCENT ROMANCE, ALTHOUGH MOST PEOPLE DON'T SPEND SO MUCH MONEY GETTING IT.
I MEAN, THIS BASE-MENT, IT'S ENORMOUS. WHY NOT SELL SOME OF THIS OLD EQUIPMENT AND TURN IT INTO, I DUNNO, A GYM OR SOMETHING?
ALREADY GOT ONE.
NO... I DON'T KNOW WHY I HANG ONTO THIS STUFF. I MEAN, I KNOW THE ROMANCE IS OVER...
...I GUESS I JUST DON'T HAVE THE HEART TO THROW OUT ALL THE ENGAGEMENT PRESENTS.
7


OH, DAN! YOU SOUND LIKE MY MAIDEN AUNT BELLA.
WELL, I WAS RICH, BORED, AND THERE WERE ENOUGH OTHER GUYS DOING IT SO I DIDN'T FEEL RIDICULOUS...
WHAT GOT YOU INTO THIS BUSINESS IN THE FIRST PLACE?
I GUESS HOLLIS WAS MY HERO. HE WAS RETIRING WHEN I WAS STARTING OUT, SO I WROTE AND ASKED IF I COULD CARRY ON HIS NAME.
I REMEMBER VISITING HIS GARAGE, THAT FIRST TIME. I WAS AWESTRUCK.
I MEAN...THERE I WAS, HANGING OUT WITH A REAL HERO, BEING HIS FRIEND AND EVERYTHING.
BEING A CRIME-FIGHTER, Y'KNOW? LIKE PART OF A BROTHERHOOD OR SOMETHING...
THAT'S WHY I SORT OF REGRETTED THE CRIMEBUSTERS FALLING THROUGH BACK IN SIXTY-WHENEVER-IT-WAS.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE JOINING THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE; BEING PART OF A FELLOWSHIP OF LEGENDARY BEINGS...
...BUT EVENTUALLY I REALIZED THE COMEDIAN WAS RIGHT: IT'S ALL CRAP DRESSED UP WITH A LOT OF FLASH AND THUNDER.
I MEAN, WHO NEEDS ALL THIS HARDWARE TO CATCH HOOKERS AND PURSE-SNATCHERS? I MEAN REALLY?
HMM. WHAT'S THAT?
PROTOTYPE EXO-SKELETON. FIRST TIME I TRIED MOVING IN IT, IT BROKE MY ARM. NEVER AGAIN.
JESUS. THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE SORT OF COSTUME THAT COULD REALLY MESS YOU UP.
IS THERE ANY OTHER SORT?
8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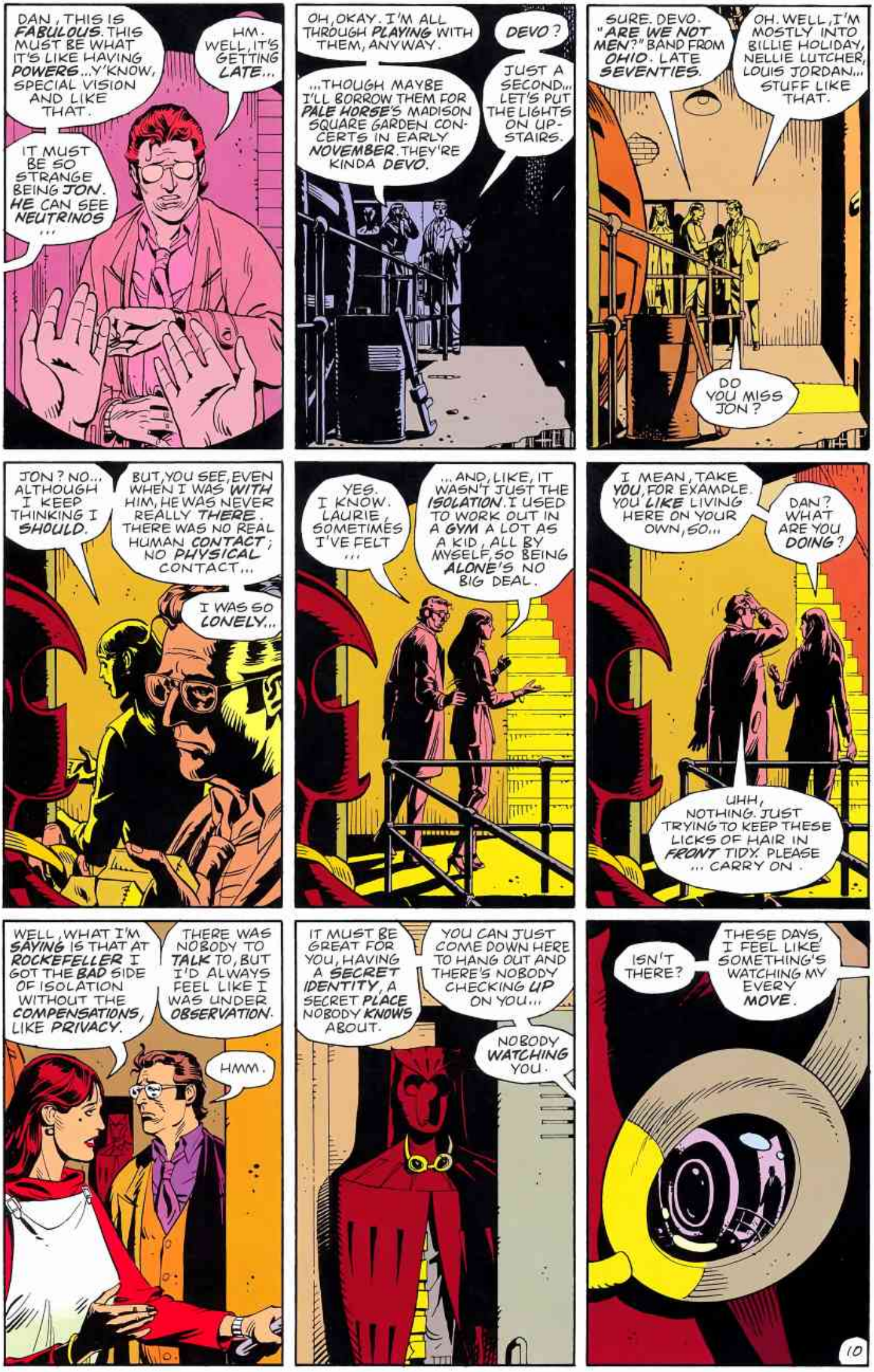
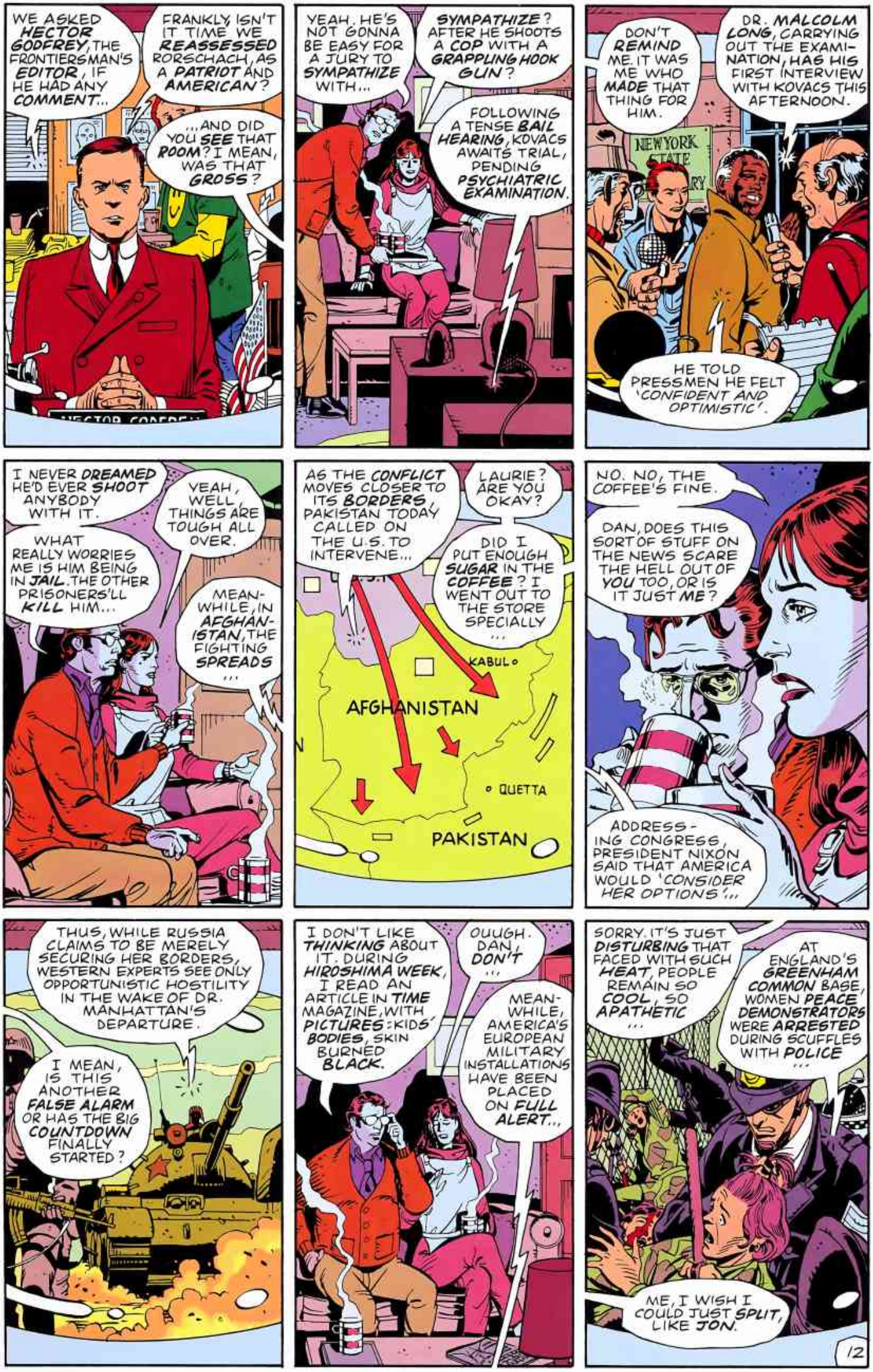
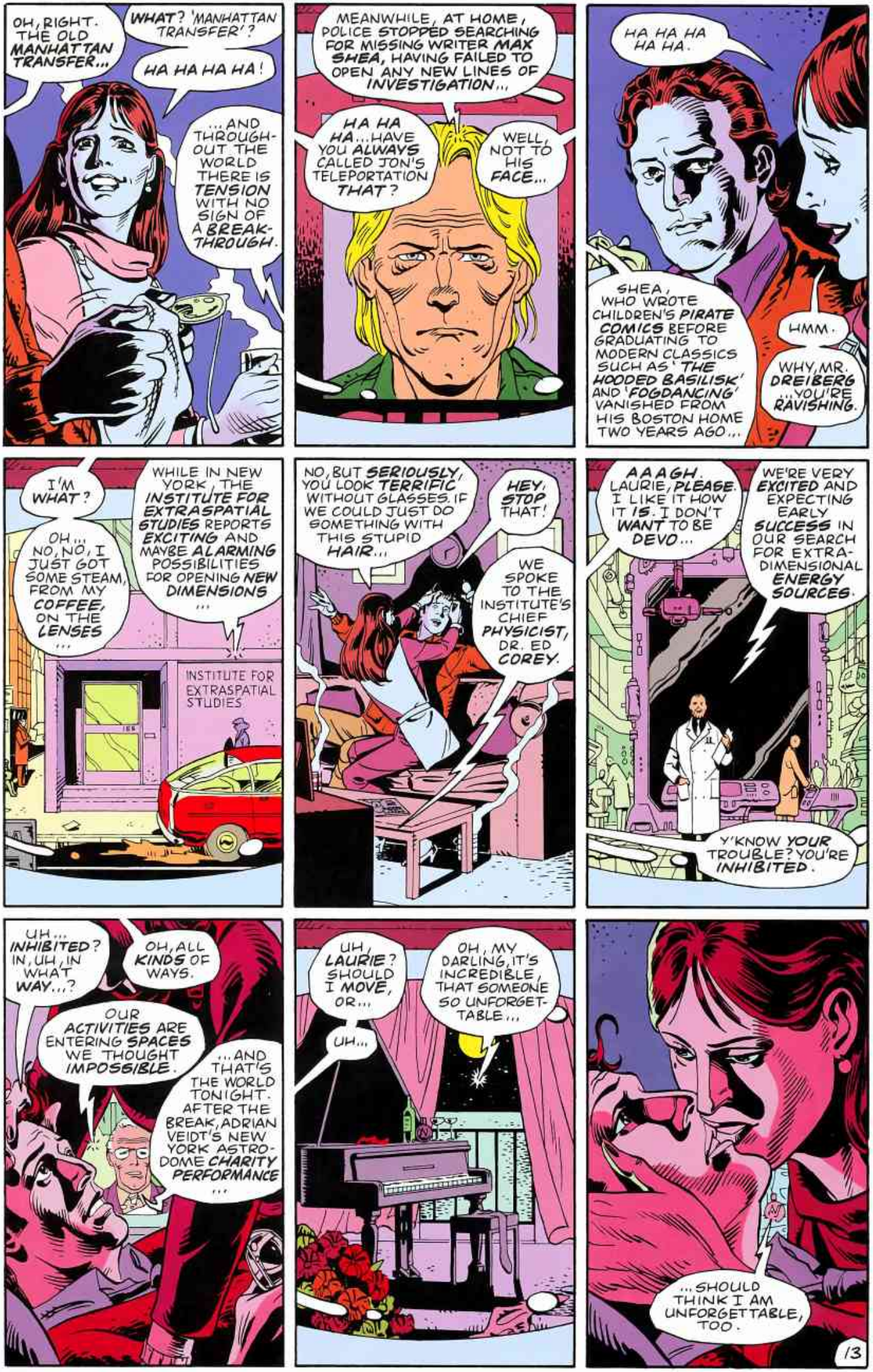
8

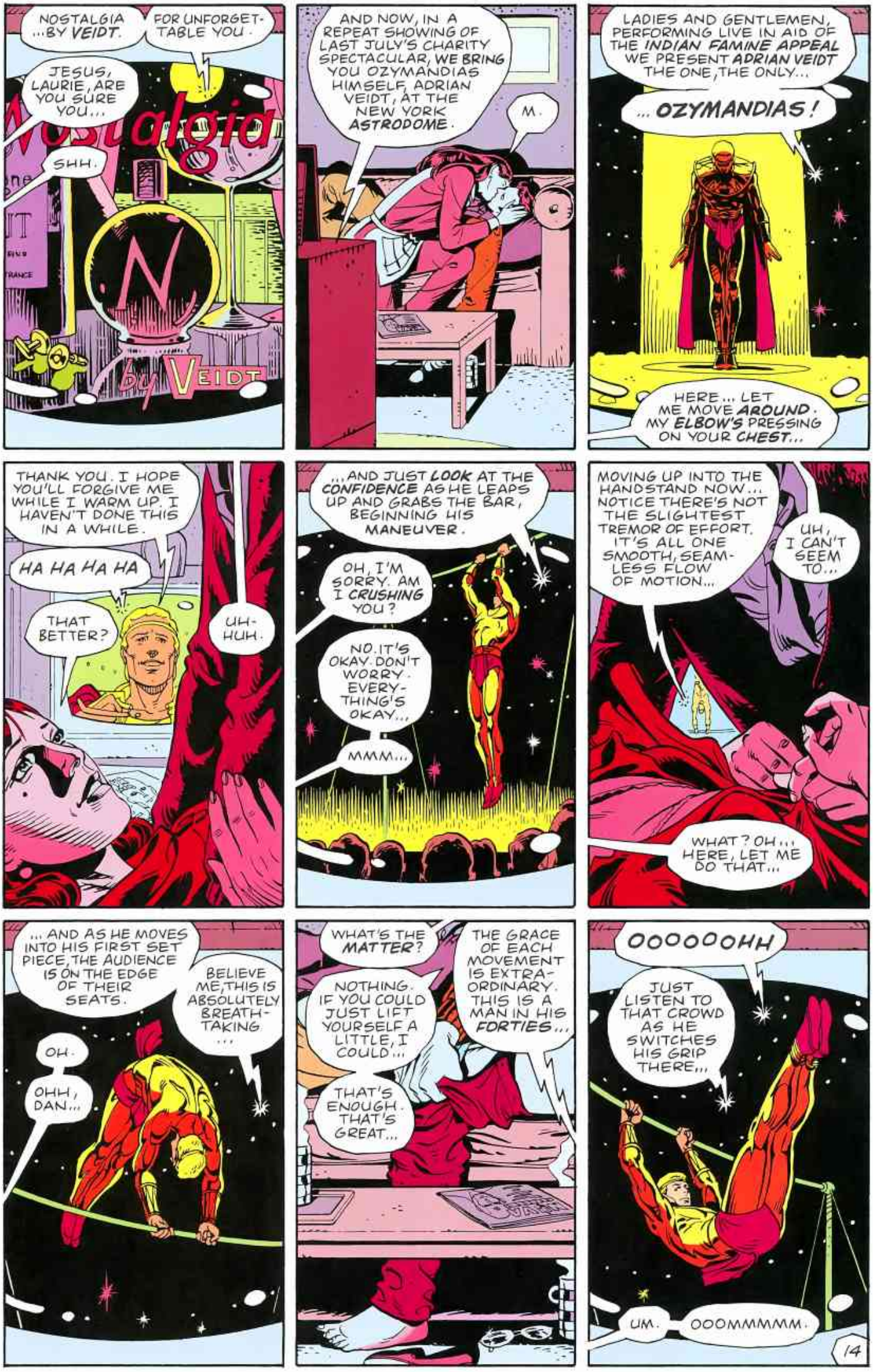
I MEAN, LOOK AT RORSCHACH, THE CONDITION HE'S IN. HE WAS NORMAL ONCE.
SURE, HE WAS QUIET, HE WAS GRIM, BUT HE STILL HAD ALL THE BUTTONS ON HIS OVER-COAT.
SOON AFTER I STARTED OUT, WE BLITZED THE BIG FIGURE TOGETHER. TACTICALLY, RORSCHACH WAS BRILLIANT. HE WAS SO UNPREDICTABLE.
WHAT I'M SAYING IS, HE WAS RATIONAL THEN.
OVER THE YEARS, THAT MASK'S EATEN HIS BRAINS.
WASN'T ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT THOSE YEARS? I MEAN, ALL THESE GADGETS YOU DESIGNED... IF THAT WAS ME, I'D FEEL PROUD.
YOU'RE REALLY INTERESTED IN ALL THIS STUFF?
WELL, UH, DID I SHOW YOU MY GOGGLES?
I MEAN, IF YOU LIKE THIS SORT OF GARBAGE... I GUESS IT'S PRETTY KITSCH OR CAMP OR WHATEVER...
DAN, DON'T BE SO SELF-DEPRECATING. I WAS ADMIRING THE GOGGLES EARLIER.
THOSE LENSES ARE PRETTY DUSTY...
HMM. THEY WORK BEST IN DARKNESS, SO I'LL KILL THE LIGHTS. I'VE GOT THIS LITTLE CONSOLE IN MY BELT HERE...
WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOT IN THERE? CHOCOLATE RATIONS? BOY SCOUT KNIFE? ARMY ISSUE CONTRACEPTIVES?
HA HA HA HA. NO, IT'S MOSTLY PRETTY BORING... RESPIRATOR MASKS, SMOKE BOMBS, FINGERPRINT KIT, POCKET LASER, THIS LITTLE CONSOLE...
YOU KNOW.
THE USUAL STUFF.
OKAY, NOW IF I SNUFF THE LIGHTS IN THE SHIP'S CABIN AND IN THE KITCHEN UPSTAIRS...
HA! SHOW-OFF.
HEY, WHAT ARE THESE GOGGLES SUPPOSED TO DO? I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. ARE THEY BROKEN?
NO. YOU JUST PRESS HERE TO ROTATE THE LENSES A QUARTER TURN, LIKE THIS.
AS I REMEMBER, THEY WORK PRETTY GOOD. NO MATTER HOW BLACK IT GOT, WHEN I LOOKED THROUGH THESE GOGGLES...
...EVERYTHING WAS CLEAR AS DAY.
OOOOH!

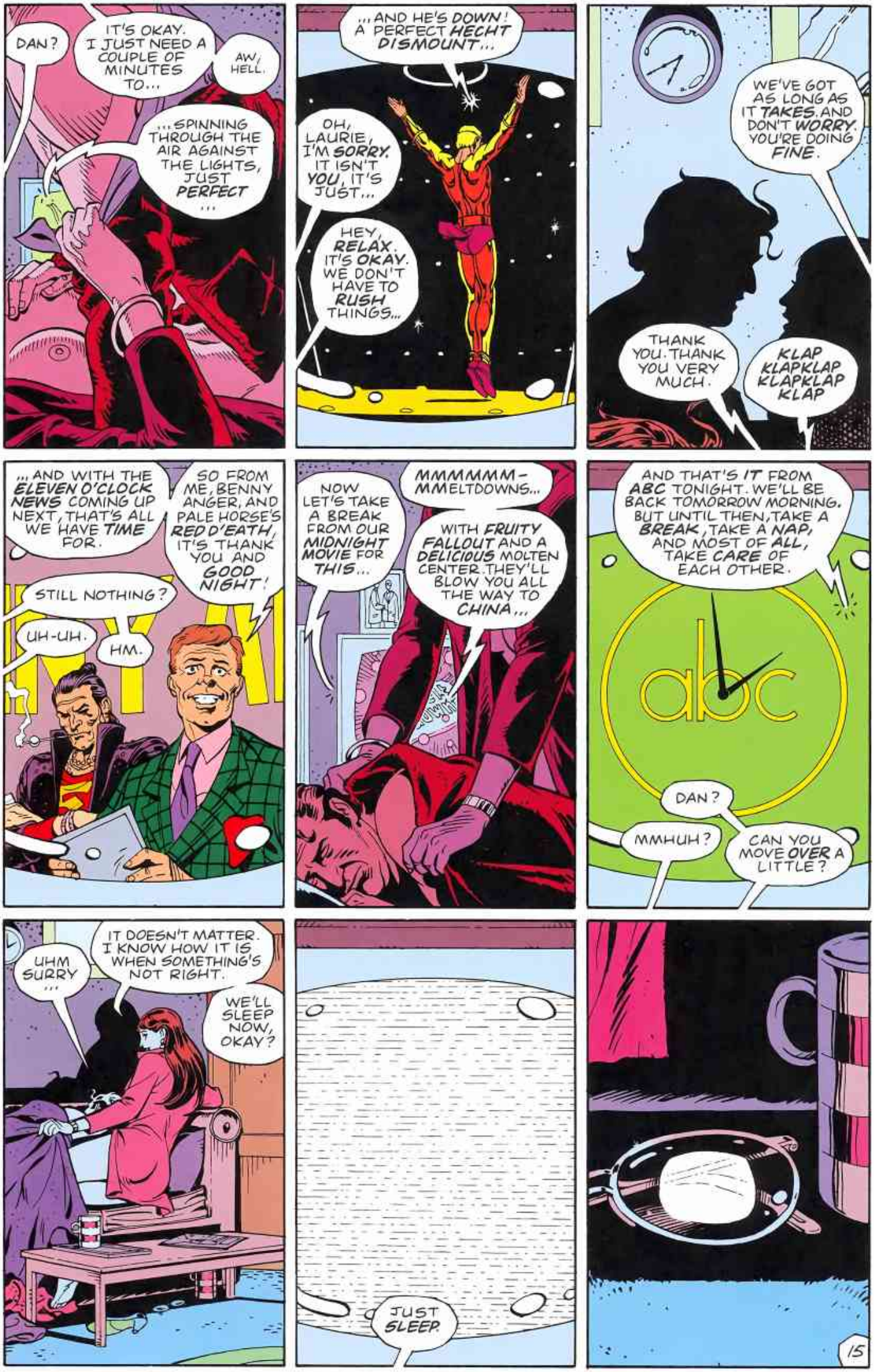

DAN, THIS IS FABULOUS. THIS MUST BE WHAT IT'S LIKE HAVING POWERS... Y'KNOW, SPECIAL VISION AND LIKE THAT.
HM. WELL, IT'S GETTING LATE...
IT MUST BE SO STRANGE BEING JON. HE CAN SEE NEUTRINOS ...
OH, OKAY. I'M ALL THROUGH PLAYING WITH THEM, ANYWAY.
DEVO?
...THOUGH MAYBE I'LL BORROW THEM FOR PALE HORSE'S MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CONCERTS IN EARLY NOVEMBER. THEY'RE KINDA DEVO.
JUST A SECOND... LET'S PUT THE LIGHTS ON UPSTAIRS.
SURE. DEVO. "ARE WE NOT MEN?" BAND FROM OHIO. LATE SEVENTIES.
OH. WELL, I'M MOSTLY INTO BILLIE HOLIDAY, NELLIE LUTCHER, LOUIS JORDAN... STUFF LIKE THAT.
DO YOU MISS JON?
JON? NO... ALTHOUGH I KEEP THINKING I SHOULD.
BUT, YOU SEE, EVEN WHEN I WAS WITH HIM, HE WAS NEVER REALLY THERE. THERE WAS NO REAL HUMAN CONTACT; NO PHYSICAL CONTACT...
I WAS SO LONELY...
YES. I KNOW. LAURIE, SOMETIMES I'VE FELT ...
...AND, LIKE, IT WASN'T JUST THE ISOLATION. I USED TO WORK OUT IN A GYM A LOT AS A KID, ALL BY MYSELF, SO BEING ALONE'S NO BIG DEAL.
I MEAN, TAKE YOU, FOR EXAMPLE. YOU LIKE LIVING HERE ON YOUR OWN, SO...
DAN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
UHH, NOTHING. JUST TRYING TO KEEP THESE LICKS OF HAIR IN FRONT TIDY. PLEASE ... CARRY ON.
WELL, WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT AT ROCKEFELLER I GOT THE BAD SIDE OF ISOLATION WITHOUT THE COMPENSATIONS, LIKE PRIVACY.
THERE WAS NOBODY TO TALK TO, BUT I'D ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I WAS UNDER OBSERVATION.
HMM.
IT MUST BE GREAT FOR YOU, HAVING A SECRET IDENTITY, A SECRET PLACE NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT.
YOU CAN JUST COME DOWN HERE TO HANG OUT AND THERE'S NOBODY CHECKING UP ON YOU...
NOBODY WATCHING YOU.
ISN'T THERE?
THESE DAYS, I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING'S WATCHING MY EVERY MOVE.
10

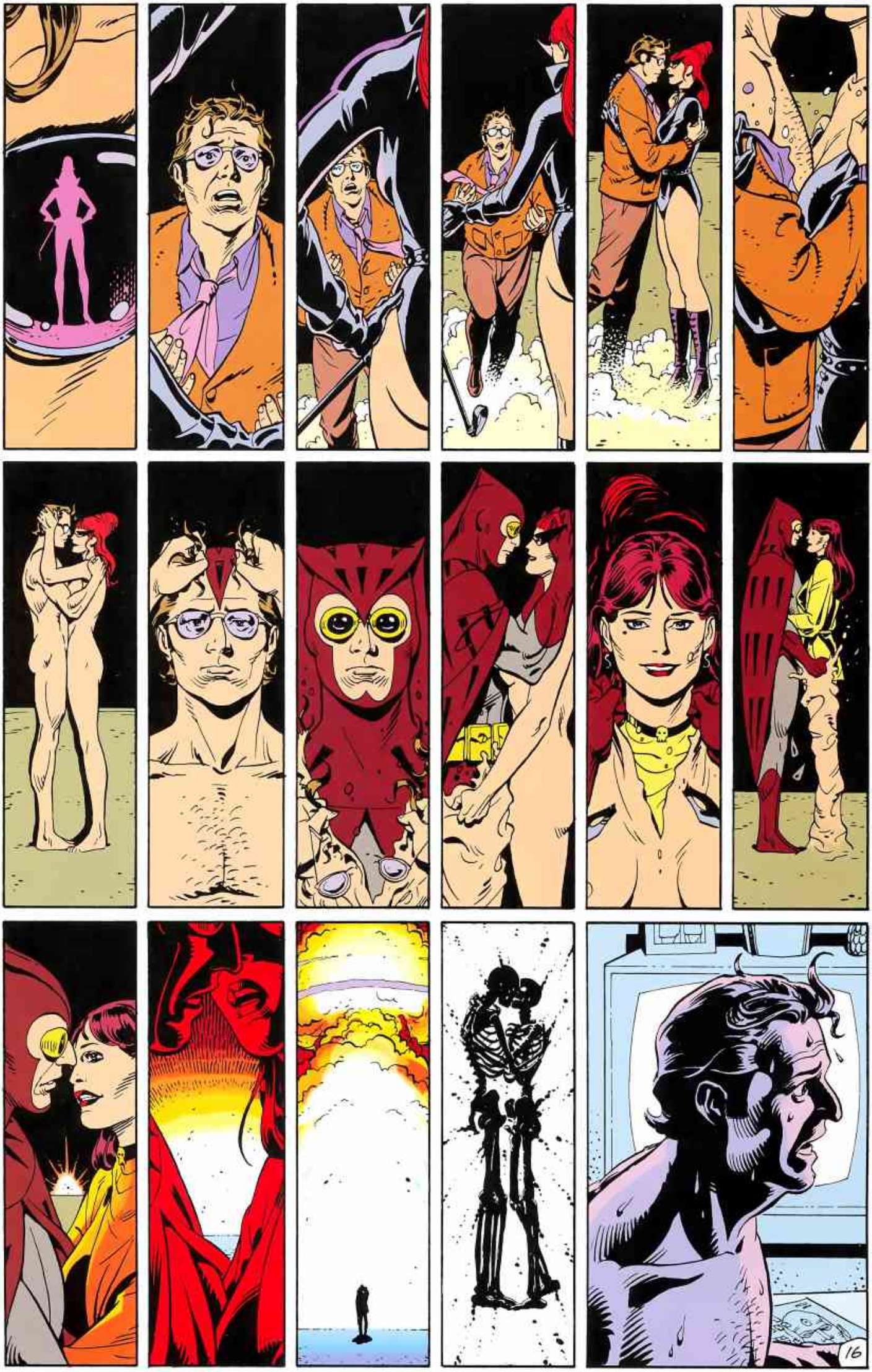
DAN, YOU SOUND LIKE RORSCHACH. THIS 'MASK KILLER' THING, IT DOESN'T HOLD UP.
I MEAN, JON LEFT EARTH OF HIS OWN FREE WILL; RORSCHACH WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED COMMITTING MURDER, FOR GOD'S SAKE...
WHERE'S THE CONSPIRACY?
I WASN'T REALLY THINKING ABOUT THE MASK KILLER, BUT...
I DON'T KNOW. THAT RORSCHACH MURDER THING SOUNDED FUNNY. HE WOULDN'T JUST SHOOT SOMEBODY. IT'S TOO ORDINARY.
ANYWAY, IT'S ALMOST SIX O'CLOCK NEWS TIME. WANT COFFEE?
SURE. BLACK AS THE DEVIL AND SWEET AS A STOLEN KISS.
WHAT?
NO MILK: TWO SUGARS. POLISH FOLK SAYING. OH, INCIDENTALLY, DID YOU SEE THAT PACKAGE THAT ARRIVED FOR ME?
UH, NO. I DIDN'T.
JUST MY CLOTHES, FORWARDED FROM ROCKEFELLER. MY OLD COSTUME, STUFF LIKE THAT.
OH, YEAH, AND A LETTER TELLING ME I DON'T HAVE CANCER. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME USING YOUR ADDRESS.
LONG AS YOU LIKE. SEE, I'M NOT REALLY THAT SOLITARY BY INCLINATION.
WELL, I JUST DON'T WANT TO GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR WORK OR ANYTHING.
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO, ACTUALLY?
OH, WELL, Y'KNOW. NOT A LOT, I GUESS. I SOMETIMES WRITE PIECES FOR ORNITHOLOGICAL JOURNALS.
REALLY? YOU DO A LOT OF THAT?
... LATEST IN A SERIES OF TENEMENT FIRES ALLEGEDLY DESIGNED TO REMOVE SITTING TENANTS...
NO. NOT MUCH. I HAVEN'T WRITTEN ANYTHING SINCE LAST APRIL. MOST PEOPLE FIND IT ALL PRETTY BORING, I GUESS...
... MEANWHILE, INVESTIGATIONS INTO CAPTURED VIGILANTE RORSCHACH ARE CONTINUING ...
USUALLY, AS SOON AS I MENTION ORNITHOLOGY, FOLKS SORT OF SWITCH OFF AND...
SHHHH!
TODAY, POLICE ALLOWED NEWS CAMERAMEN INTO THE APARTMENT USED BY RORSCHACH, REAL NAME WALTER JOSEPH KOVACS.
HIS LANDLADY, MS. DOLORES SHAIRP, DESCRIBED KOVACS AS 'A NAZI PERVERT' AND SAID THAT HE'D FREQUENTLY PROPOSITIONED HER SEXUALLY...
HA! I KNEW IT!
THE END
SHE POINTED OUT STACKS OF RIGHT WING LITERATURE INCLUDING BACK ISSUES OF THE NEW FRONTIERSMAN.
11

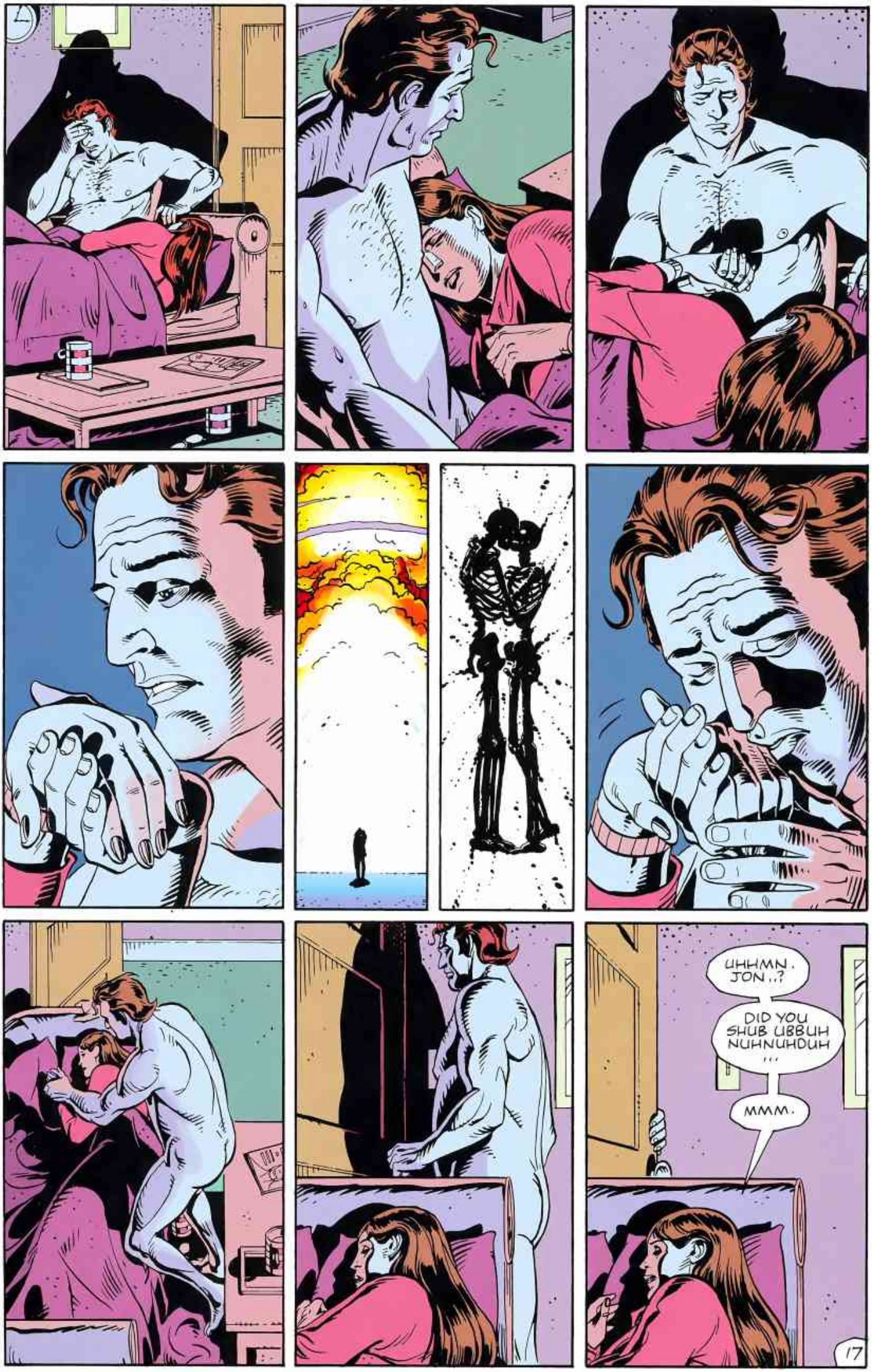

WE ASKED HECTOR GODFREY, THE FRONTIERSMAN'S EDITOR, IF HE HAD ANY COMMENT...
FRANKLY, ISN'T IT TIME WE REASSESSED RORSCHACH, AS A PATRIOT AND AMERICAN?
...AND DID YOU SEE THAT POOM? I MEAN, WAS THAT GROSS?
YEAH, HE'S NOT GONNA BE EASY FOR A JURY TO SYMPATHIZE WITH...
SYMPATHIZE? AFTER HE SHOOTS A COP WITH A GRAPPLING HOOK GUN?
FOLLOWING A TENSE BAIL HEARING, KOVACS AWAITS TRIAL, PENDING PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION.
DON'T REMIND ME. IT WAS ME WHO MADE THAT THING FOR HIM.
DR. MALCOLM LONG, CARRYING OUT THE EXAMINATION, HAS HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH KOVACS THIS AFTERNOON.
NEW YORK STATE
HE TOLD PRESSMEN HE FELT 'CONFIDENT AND OPTIMISTIC'.
I NEVER DREAMED HE'D EVER SHOOT ANYBODY WITH IT.
YEAH, WELL, THINGS ARE TOUGH ALL OVER.
WHAT REALLY WORRIES ME IS HIM BEING IN JAIL. THE OTHER PRISONERS'LL KILL HIM...
MEAN-WHILE, IN AFGHAN-ISTAN, THE FIGHTING SPREADS ...
AS THE CONFLICT MOVES CLOSER TO ITS BORDERS, PAKISTAN TODAY CALLED ON THE U.S. TO INTERVENE...
LAURIE? ARE YOU OKAY?
DID I PUT ENOUGH SUGAR IN THE COFFEE? I WENT OUT TO THE STORE SPECIALLY ...
KABUL
AFGHANISTAN
QUETTA
PAKISTAN
NO. NO, THE COFFEE'S FINE.
DAN, DOES THIS SORT OF STUFF ON THE NEWS SCARE THE HELL OUT OF YOU TOO, OR IS IT JUST ME?
ADDRESS-ING CONGRESS, PRESIDENT NIXON SAID THAT AMERICA WOULD 'CONSIDER HER OPTIONS'...
THUS, WHILE RUSSIA CLAIMS TO BE MERELY SECURING HER BORDERS, WESTERN EXPERTS SEE ONLY OPPORTUNISTIC HOSTILITY IN THE WAKE OF DR. MANHATTAN'S DEPARTURE.
I MEAN, IS THIS ANOTHER FALSE ALARM OR HAS THE BIG COUNTDOWN FINALLY STARTED?
I DON'T LIKE THINKING ABOUT IT. DURING HIROSHIMA WEEK, I READ AN ARTICLE IN TIME MAGAZINE, WITH PICTURES: KIDS' BODIES, SKIN BURNED BLACK.
OUUGH. DAN, DON'T ...
MEAN-WHILE, AMERICA'S EUROPEAN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON FULL ALERT...
SORRY. IT'S JUST DISTURBING THAT FACED WITH SUCH HEAT, PEOPLE REMAIN SO COOL, SO APATHETIC ...
AT ENGLAND'S GREENHAM COMMON BASE, WOMEN PEACE DEMONSTRATORS WERE ARRESTED DURING SCUFFLES WITH POLICE ...
ME, I WISH I COULD JUST SPLIT, LIKE JON.
12


OH, RIGHT. THE OLD MANHATTAN TRANSFER...
WHAT? 'MANHATTAN TRANSFER'?
HA HA HA HA!
...AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THERE IS TENSION WITH NO SIGN OF A BREAKTHROUGH.
MEANWHILE, AT HOME, POLICE STOPPED SEARCHING FOR MISSING WRITER MAX SHEA, HAVING FAILED TO OPEN ANY NEW LINES OF INVESTIGATION...
HA HA HA...HAVE YOU ALWAYS CALLED JON'S TELEPORTATION THAT?
WELL, NOT TO HIS FACE...
HA HA HA HA HA.
SHEA, WHO WROTE CHILDREN'S PIRATE COMICS BEFORE GRADUATING TO MODERN CLASSICS SUCH AS 'THE HOODED BASILISK' AND 'FOGDANCING' VANISHED FROM HIS BOSTON HOME TWO YEARS AGO...
HMM.
WHY, MR. DREIBERG ...YOU'RE RAVISHING.
I'M WHAT?
OH... NO, NO, I JUST GOT SOME STEAM, FROM MY COFFEE, ON THE LENSES ...
WHILE IN NEW YORK, THE INSTITUTE FOR EXTRASPATIAL STUDIES REPORTS EXCITING AND MAYBE ALARMING POSSIBILITIES FOR OPENING NEW DIMENSIONS ...
INSTITUTE FOR EXTRASPATIAL STUDIES
NO, BUT SERIOUSLY, YOU LOOK TERRIFIC WITHOUT GLASSES. IF WE COULD JUST DO SOMETHING WITH THIS STUPID HAIR...
HEY, STOP THAT!
WE SPOKE TO THE INSTITUTE'S CHIEF PHYSICIST, DR. ED COREY.
AAAGH. LAURIE, PLEASE. I LIKE IT HOW IT IS. I DON'T WANT TO BE DEVO...
WE'RE VERY EXCITED AND EXPECTING EARLY SUCCESS IN OUR SEARCH FOR EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL ENERGY SOURCES.
Y'KNOW YOUR TROUBLE? YOU'RE INHIBITED.
UH... INHIBITED? IN, UH, IN WHAT WAY...?
OH, ALL KINDS OF WAYS.
OUR ACTIVITIES ARE ENTERING SPACES WE THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE.
...AND THAT'S THE WORLD TONIGHT. AFTER THE BREAK, ADRIAN VEIDT'S NEW YORK ASTRODOME CHARITY PERFORMANCE ...
UH, LAURIE? SHOULD I MOVE, OR...
UH...
OH, MY DARLING, IT'S INCREDIBLE, THAT SOMEONE SO UNFORGETTABLE...
...SHOULD THINK I AM UNFORGETTABLE, TOO.

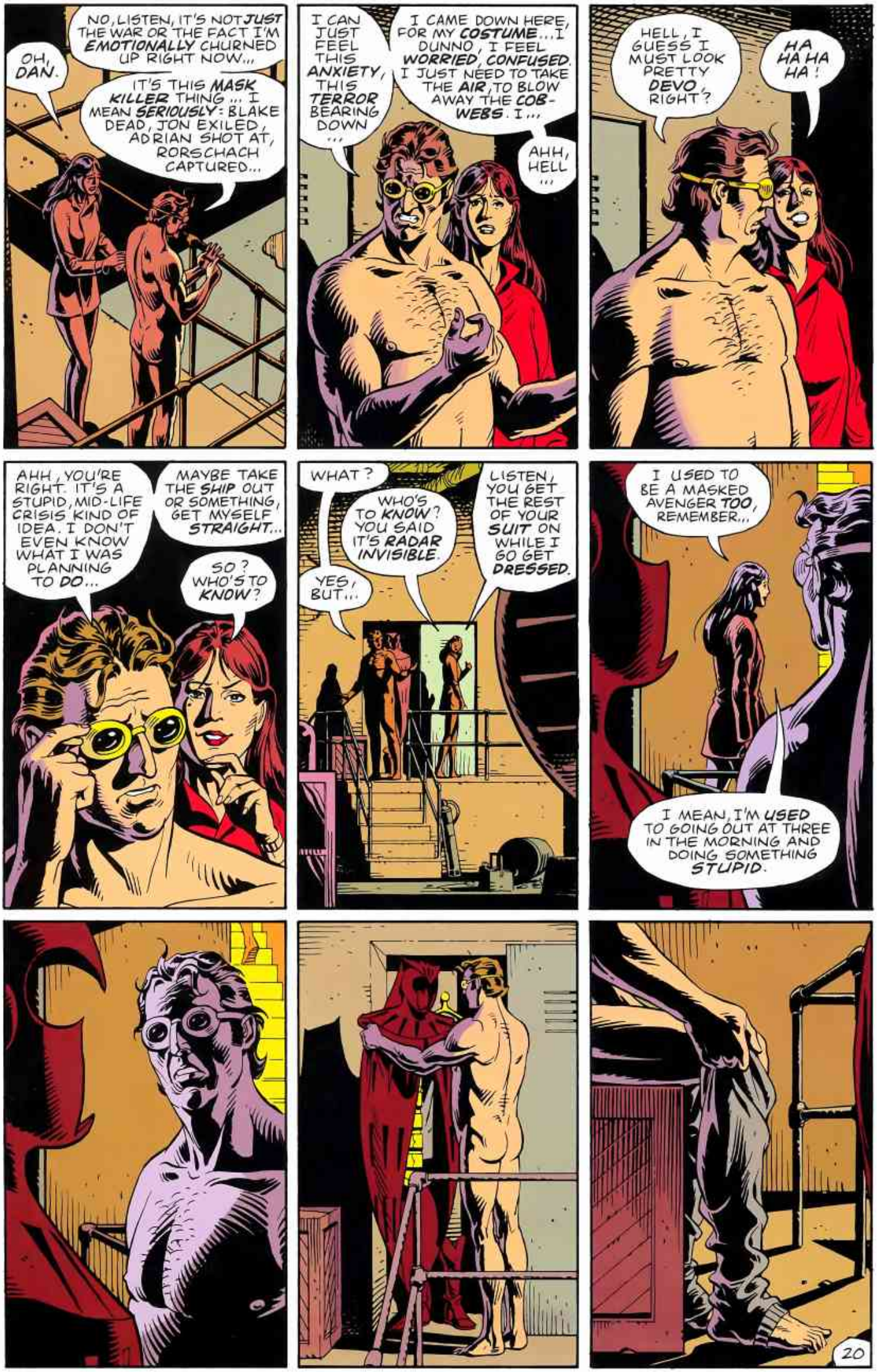

NOSTALGIA ...BY VEIDT.
FOR UNFORGETTABLE YOU.
JESUS, LAURIE, ARE YOU SURE YOU...
SHH.
Nostalgia
By VEIDT
AND NOW, IN A REPEAT SHOWING OF LAST JULY'S CHARITY SPECTACULAR, WE BRING YOU OZYMANDIAS HIMSELF, ADRIAN VEIDT, AT THE NEW YORK ASTRODOME.
M.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PERFORMING LIVE IN AID OF THE INDIAN FAMINE APPEAL WE PRESENT ADRIAN VEIDT THE ONE, THE ONLY...
... OZYMANDIAS!
HERE... LET ME MOVE AROUND. MY ELBOW'S PRESSING ON YOUR CHEST...
THANK YOU. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME WHILE I WARM UP. I HAVEN'T DONE THIS IN A WHILE.
HA HA HA HA
THAT BETTER?
UH-HUH.
...AND JUST LOOK AT THE CONFIDENCE AS HE LEAPS UP AND GRABS THE BAR, BEGINNING HIS MANEUVER.
OH, I'M SORRY. AM I CRUSHING YOU?
NO. IT'S OKAY. DON'T WORRY. EVERYTHING'S OKAY...
MMM...
MOVING UP INTO THE HANDSTAND NOW... NOTICE THERE'S NOT THE SLIGHTEST TREMOR OF EFFORT. IT'S ALL ONE SMOOTH, SEAMLESS FLOW OF MOTION...
UH, I CAN'T SEEM TO...
WHAT? OH... HERE, LET ME DO THAT...
... AND AS HE MOVES INTO HIS FIRST SET PIECE, THE AUDIENCE IS ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS.
BELIEVE ME, THIS IS ABSOLUTELY BREATHTAKING...
OH.
OHH, DAN...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTHING. IF YOU COULD JUST LIFT YOURSELF A LITTLE, I COULD...
THAT'S ENOUGH. THAT'S GREAT...
THE GRACE OF EACH MOVEMENT IS EXTRAORDINARY. THIS IS A MAN IN HIS FORTIES...
OOOOOOHH
JUST LISTEN TO THAT CROWD AS HE SWITCHES HIS GRIP THERE...
UM.
OOOMMMMM.
14

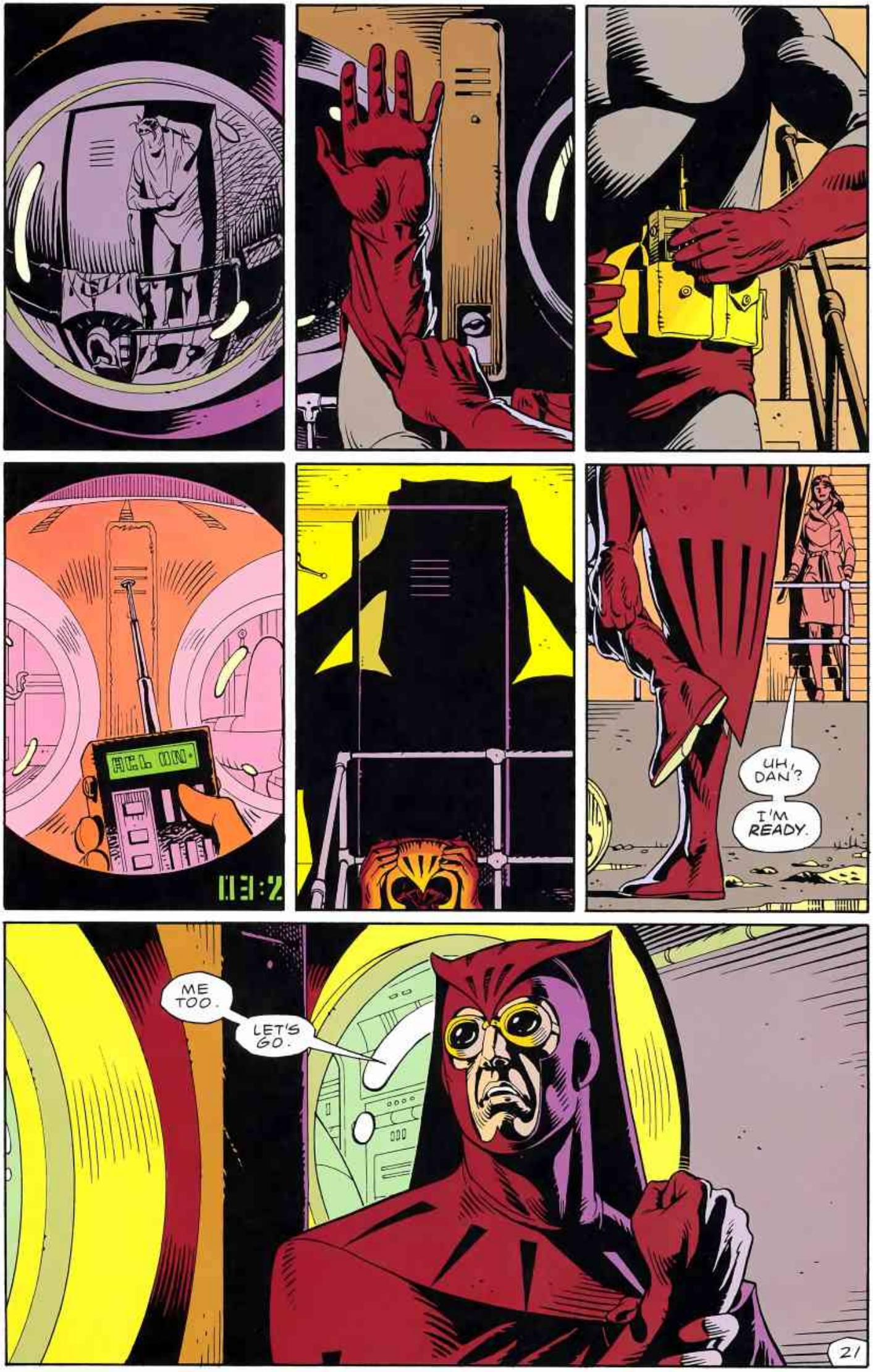

DAN?
IT'S OKAY. I JUST NEED A COUPLE OF MINUTES TO...
AW, HELL.
...SPINNING THROUGH THE AIR AGAINST THE LIGHTS, JUST PERFECT ...
...AND HE'S DOWN! A PERFECT HECHT DISMOUNT...
OH, LAURIE, I'M SORRY. IT ISN'T YOU, IT'S JUST...
HEY, RELAX. IT'S OKAY. WE DON'T HAVE TO RUSH THINGS...
WE'VE GOT AS LONG AS IT TAKES. AND DON'T WORRY. YOU'RE DOING FINE.
THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
KLAP KLAPKLAP KLAPKLAP KLAP
...AND WITH THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS COMING UP NEXT, THAT'S ALL WE HAVE TIME FOR.
SO FROM ME, BENNY ANGER, AND PALE HORSE'S RED D'EATH, IT'S THANK YOU AND GOOD NIGHT!
STILL NOTHING?
UH-UH.
HM.
NOW LET'S TAKE A BREAK FROM OUR MIDNIGHT MOVIE FOR THIS...
MMMMMM-MMELTDOWNS...
WITH FRUITY FALLOUT AND A DELICIOUS MOLTEN CENTER. THEY'LL BLOW YOU ALL THE WAY TO CHINA...
AND THAT'S IT FROM ABC TONIGHT. WE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW MORNING. BUT UNTIL THEN, TAKE A BREAK, TAKE A NAP, AND MOST OF ALL, TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.
abc
DAN?
MMHUH?
CAN YOU MOVE OVER A LITTLE?
UHM SURRY ...
IT DOESN'T MATTER. I KNOW HOW IT IS WHEN SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.
WE'LL SLEEP NOW, OKAY?
JUST SLEEP.
15



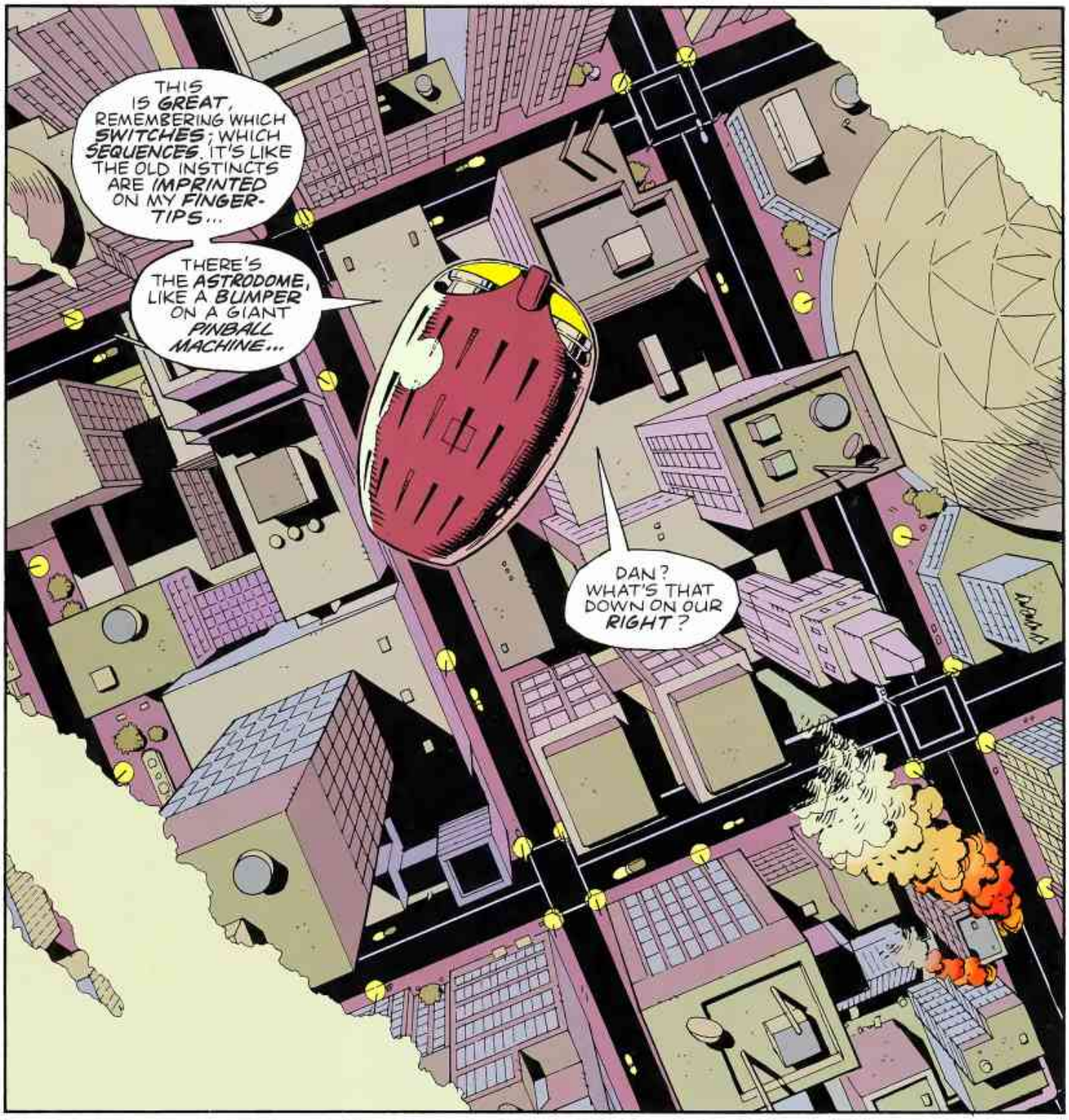

UHHMN. JON..?
DID YOU SHUB UBBUH NUHNUHDUH ...
MMM.

DAN?
DAN? WHERE ARE YOU?
DID YOU GO TO THE BATHROOM, OR...
DOWN HERE.
DOWN...? WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE? I WOKE UP, AND THE T.V. WAS STILL ON AND EVERYTHING...
I MEAN, IT'S ONLY A QUARTER AFTER THREE...
YES.
I KNOW.
DAN?
UH... HEY, ARE YOU OKAY? I MEAN, YOU SOUND UPSET...
A DREAM. I...I JUST HAD A DREAM IS ALL.
W-WE WERE KISSING, AND THEN THIS NUCLEAR BOMB, IT JUST...
WE BURNED UP. WE WERE GONE. EVERYTHING WAS GONE...
IT'S THIS WAR, THE FEELING THAT IT'S UNAVOIDABLE. IT MAKES ME FEEL SO POWERLESS.
SO IMPOTENT.
19


OH, DAN.
NO, LISTEN, IT'S NOT JUST THE WAR OR THE FACT I'M EMOTIONALLY CHURNED UP RIGHT NOW...
IT'S THIS MASK KILLER THING ... I MEAN SERIOUSLY: BLAKE DEAD, JON EXILED, ADRIAN SHOT AT, RORSCHACH CAPTURED...
I CAN JUST FEEL THIS ANXIETY, THIS TERROR BEARING DOWN ...
I CAME DOWN HERE, FOR MY COSTUME... I DUNNO, I FEEL WORRIED, CONFUSED. I JUST NEED TO TAKE THE AIR, TO BLOW AWAY THE COB-WEBS. I...
AHH, HELL ...
HELL, I GUESS I MUST LOOK PRETTY DEVO, RIGHT?
HA HA HA HA!
AHH, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S A STUPID, MID-LIFE CRISIS KIND OF IDEA. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I WAS PLANNING TO DO...
MAYBE TAKE THE SHIP OUT OR SOMETHING, GET MYSELF STRAIGHT...
SO? WHO'S TO KNOW?
WHAT?
WHO'S TO KNOW? YOU SAID IT'S RADAR INVISIBLE.
YES, BUT...
LISTEN, YOU GET THE REST OF YOUR SUIT ON WHILE I GO GET DRESSED.
I USED TO BE A MASKED AVENGER TOO, REMEMBER...
I MEAN, I'M USED TO GOING OUT AT THREE IN THE MORNING AND DOING SOMETHING STUPID.
20


HELLO.
UH, DAN?
I'M READY.
ME TOO.
LET'S GO.
21

UH, WILL THIS THING STILL FLY OKAY AND EVERY-THING?
SURE. I RAN A SCAN ON ARCHIE EARLIER: NOT A FEATHER OUT OF PLACE. LET ME JUST PLUG THE STEERING COLUMN IN OVER HERE...
HMM. GOT SOOT IN HIS EYES...
OH! WE'RE MOVING.
YES. I'M SORRY... HE ALWAYS GIVES THAT LITTLE LURCH WHEN HE STARTS UP. CAN'T SEEM TO IRON IT OUT.
BETTER WASH THESE WINDOWS DOWN BEFORE WE HIT THE EXIT TUNNEL...
WOW. IT'S LIKE BEING ON A GHOST TRAIN: THE DOORS BUMP OPEN, YOU ENTER THE TUNNEL...
HEH. ACTUALLY, IT'S A FORGOTTEN SECTION OF SUB-WAY I CONVERTED AFTER BUYING THE BUILDING ABOVE.
LET'S PICK UP A LITTLE SPEED HERE.
IS IT OKAY TO GO THIS FAST? WHERE DOES THE TUNNEL COME OUT?
A DERELICT WARE-HOUSE TWO BLOCKS NORTH. I OWN THAT, TOO.
LET'S JUST HOPE THE STEEL FLOOD DOORS OVER THE END OF THE TUNNEL HAVEN'T RUSTED SHUT.
RUSTED SHUT? DAN! ARE YOU..?
RELAX. JUST KIDDING.
OKAY, IN A MOMENT I'M GOING TO TAKE HIM UP. JUST HAVE TO ARRANGE SOME CLOUD COVER WITH THE FOG-SCREENS...
FOG-SCREENS?
DRY ICE. ARCHIE BREATHES SMOKE AS WELL AS FIRE.
OKAY NOW, HOLD TIGHT. I'M ROLLING BACK THE WAREHOUSE ROOF.
HERE WE GO...

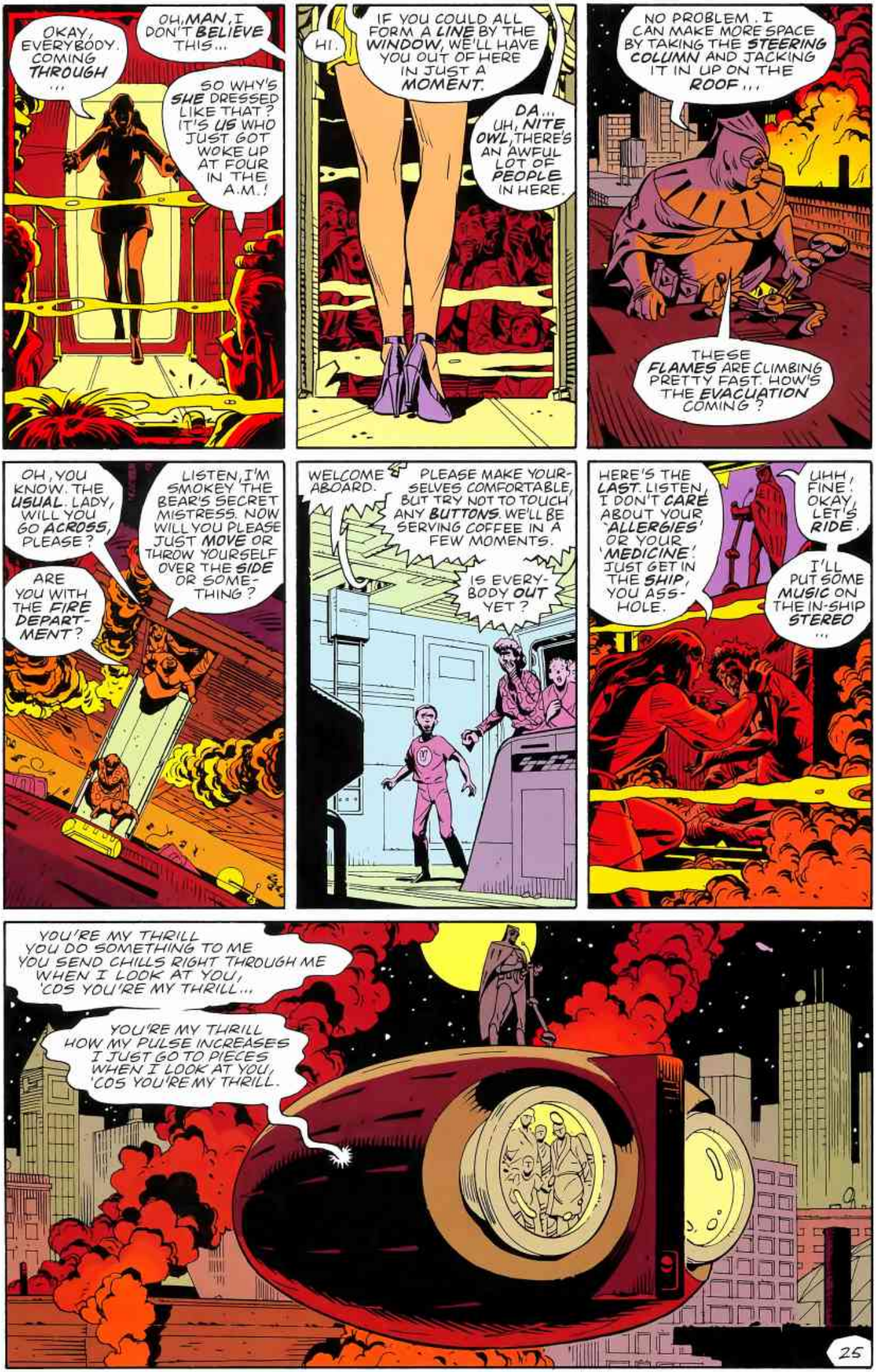

THIS IS GREAT, REMEMBERING WHICH SWITCHES; WHICH SEQUENCES. IT'S LIKE THE OLD INSTINCTS ARE IMPRINTED ON MY FINGER-TIPS...
THERE'S THE ASTRODOME, LIKE A BUMPER ON A GIANT PINBALL MACHINE...
DAN? WHAT'S THAT DOWN ON OUR RIGHT?

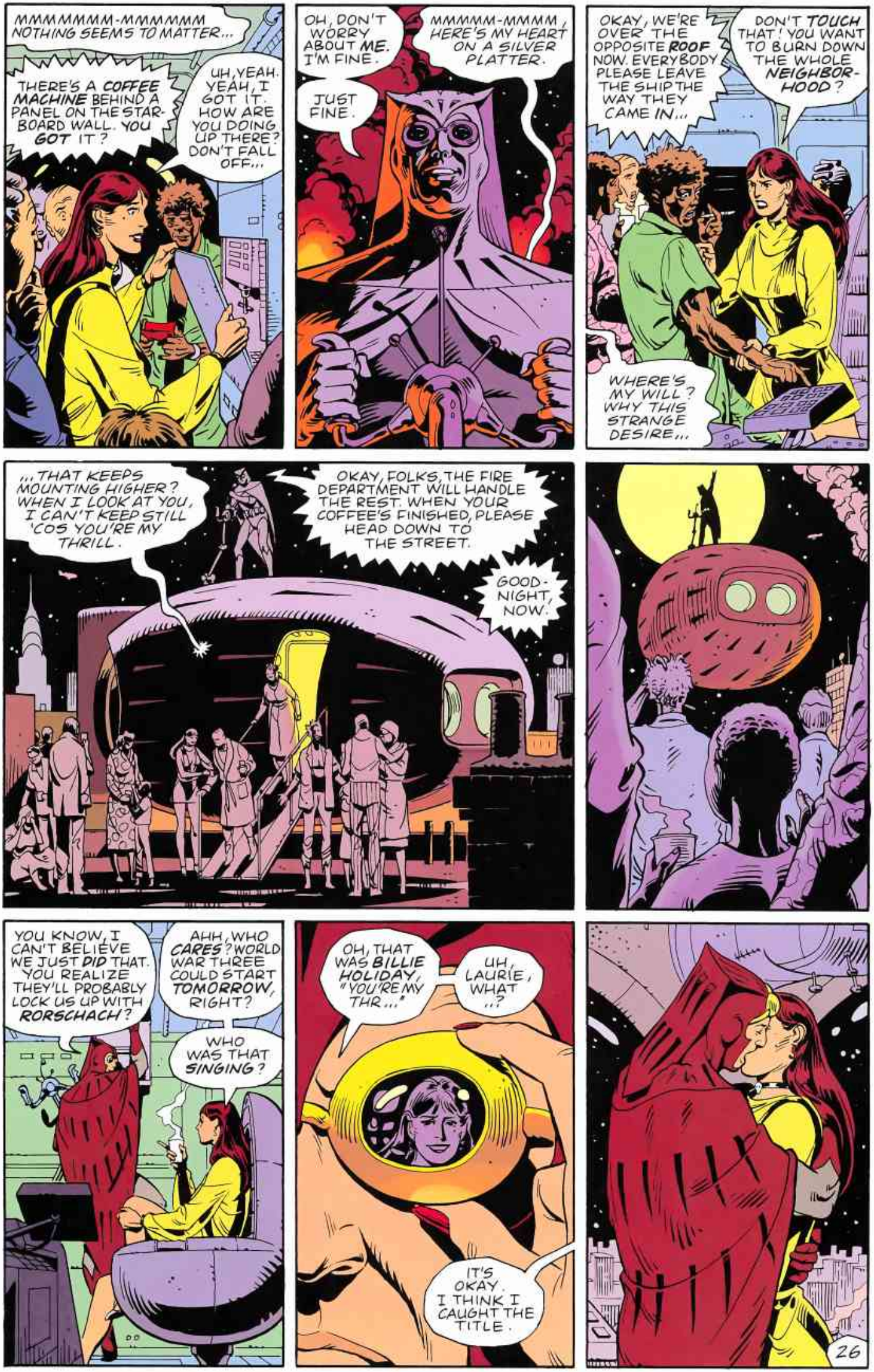
WAIT A MINUTE. LET'S GET SOME CAMERAS ON THAT SO WE CAN...
HMM. TENEMENT BUILDING ON FIRE. LOOKS LIKE PEOPLE TRAPPED THERE ON THE UPPER STORYS.
OH, JESUS. I SEE KIDS. CAN YOU DO ANY-THING?

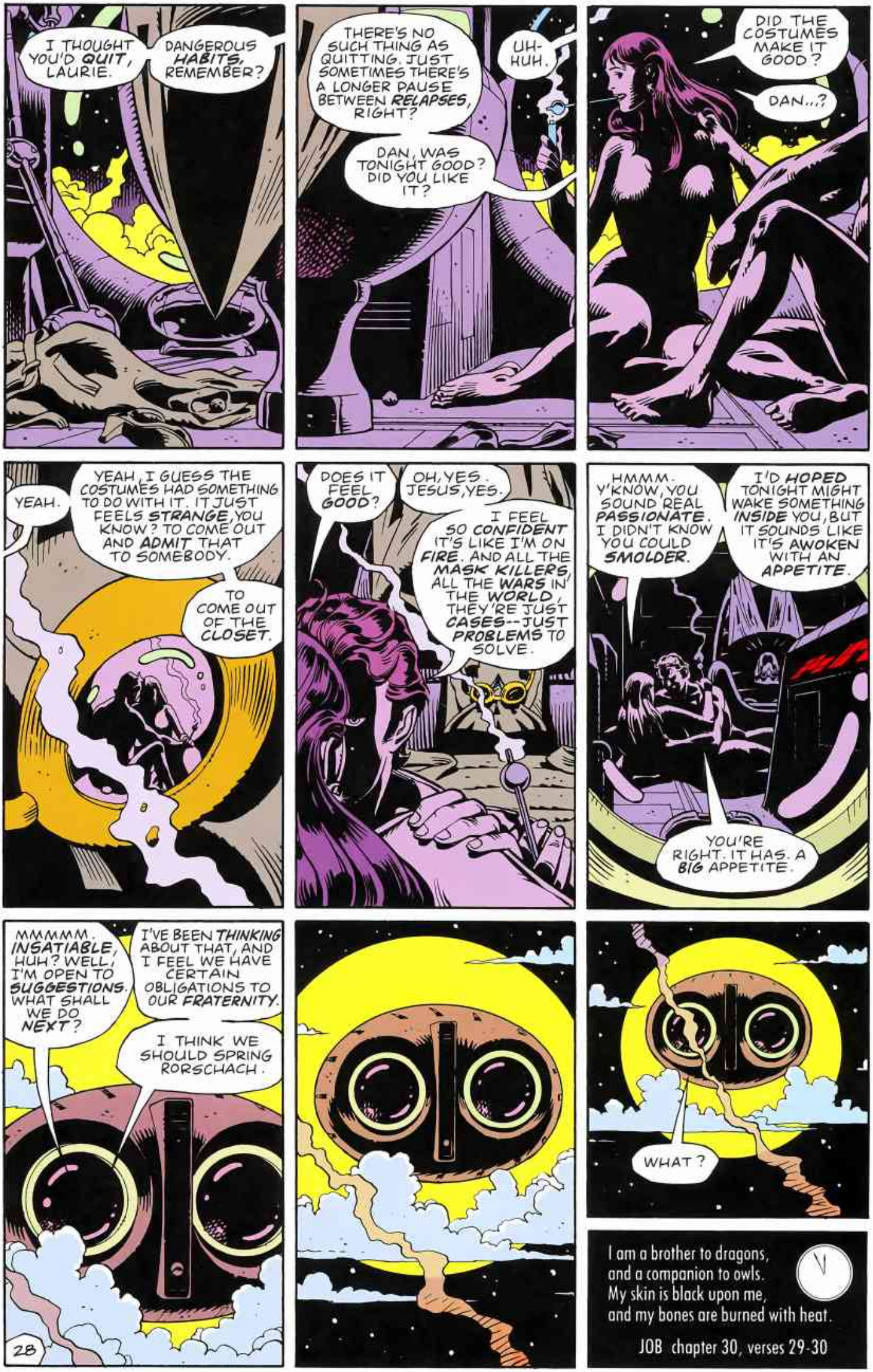
"LET'S HOPE SO. TAKING HIM DOWN NOW..."
OUTTA MY WAY, BITCH, I CAN'T BREATHE ...
OH, GOD, PLEASE SAVE US! WE AIN'T DONE ANYTHING! MY BABY, HE AIN'T DONE NOTHIN'. OH JESUS, LORD, I'M PRAYING TO YOU...
MOMEEEEE!

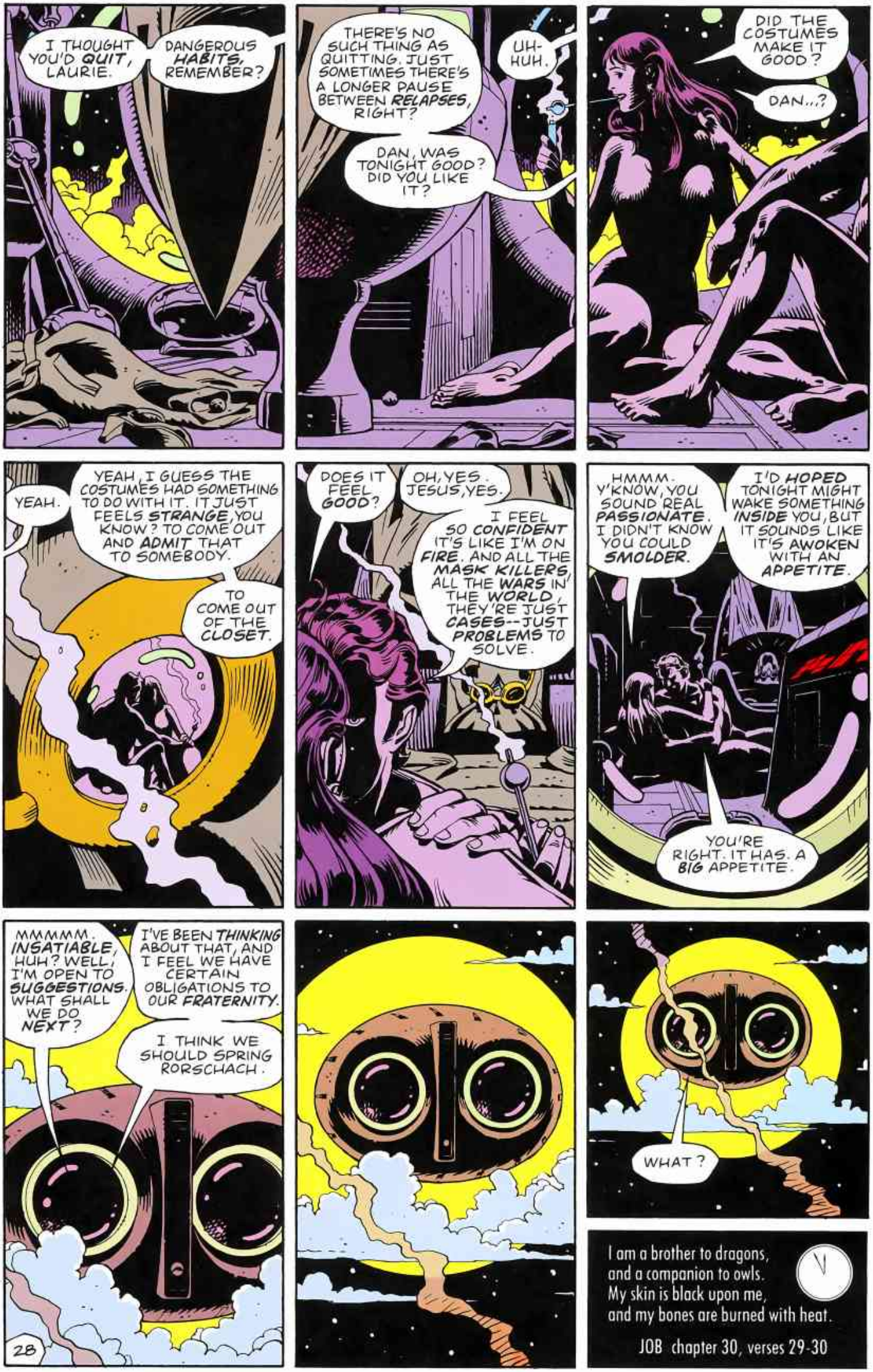
PLEASE STAY CALM. YOUR PREDICAMENT HAS BEEN NOTICED AND THE SITUATION IS BEING ATTENDED TO.

OKAY, THERE'S WATER CANNONS TRAINED ON THE LOWER STORYS TO SLOW DOWN THE FIRE.
ALL YOU PEOPLE IN THERE, PLEASE GET TO THE TOP FLOOR. WE'LL JOIN YOU IN A MOMENT.
THANK YOU.
I'LL EXTEND A RAMP FROM THE REAR DOOR TO A WINDOW, SO WE CAN SHEPHERD EVERYBODY ONTO THE SHIP.
HMM. IF I'M GOING TO BE WORKING CLOSE TO THE BLAZE, I WON'T NEED MY COAT.
WELL?
UH?
WUH, WELL WHAT?
WELL WHAT ABOUT THE RAMP? THERE'S A BUNCH OF PEOPLE STILL NEED THEIR ASSES HAULED OUT OF THE FIRE, REMEMBER?
OH. OH, RIGHT. SURE...
THE RAMP. ABSOLUTELY...
GET BACK! IT'S POKIN' SOMETHIN' AT THE BUILDING!
MOM? THAT GUY IN THE SPACE ROCKET, IS THAT JESUS?
24


OKAY, EVERYBODY. COMING THROUGH ...
OH, MAN, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...
SO WHY'S SHE DRESSED LIKE THAT? IT'S US WHO JUST GOT WOKE UP AT FOUR IN THE A.M.!
HI.
IF YOU COULD ALL FORM A LINE BY THE WINDOW, WE'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF HERE IN JUST A MOMENT.
DA... UH, NITE OWL, THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF PEOPLE IN HERE.
NO PROBLEM. I CAN MAKE MORE SPACE BY TAKING THE STEERING COLUMN AND JACKING IT IN UP ON THE ROOF...
THESE FLAMES ARE CLIMBING PRETTY FAST. HOW'S THE EVACUATION COMING?
OH, YOU KNOW. THE USUAL. LADY, WILL YOU GO ACROSS, PLEASE?
ARE YOU WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT?
LISTEN, I'M SMOKEY THE BEAR'S SECRET MISTRESS. NOW WILL YOU PLEASE JUST MOVE OR THROW YOURSELF OVER THE SIDE OR SOMETHING?
WELCOME ABOARD.
PLEASE MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE, BUT TRY NOT TO TOUCH ANY BUTTONS. WE'LL BE SERVING COFFEE IN A FEW MOMENTS.
IS EVERYBODY OUT YET?
HERE'S THE LAST. LISTEN, I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR 'ALLERGIES' OR YOUR 'MEDICINE'. JUST GET IN THE SHIP, YOU ASSHOLE.
UHH, FINE. OKAY, LET'S RIDE.
I'LL PUT SOME MUSIC ON THE IN-SHIP STEREO ...
YOU'RE MY THRILL YOU DO SOMETHING TO ME YOU SEND CHILLS RIGHT THROUGH ME WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, 'COS YOU'RE MY THRILL...
YOU'RE MY THRILL HOW MY PULSE INCREASES I JUST GO TO PIECES WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, 'COS YOU'RE MY THRILL.


MMMMMMM-MMMMMM NOTHING SEEMS TO MATTER...
THERE'S A COFFEE MACHINE BEHIND A PANEL ON THE STARBOARD WALL. YOU GOT IT?
UH, YEAH. YEAH, I GOT IT. HOW ARE YOU DOING UP THERE? DON'T FALL OFF...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'M FINE.
JUST FINE.
MMMMM-MMMM, HERE'S MY HEART ON A SILVER PLATTER.
OKAY, WE'RE OVER THE OPPOSITE ROOF NOW. EVERYBODY PLEASE LEAVE THE SHIP THE WAY THEY CAME IN...
DON'T TOUCH THAT! YOU WANT TO BURN DOWN THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD?
WHERE'S MY WILL? WHY THIS STRANGE DESIRE...
...THAT KEEPS MOUNTING HIGHER? WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I CAN'T KEEP STILL 'COS YOU'RE MY THRILL.
OKAY, FOLKS, THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WILL HANDLE THE REST. WHEN YOUR COFFEE'S FINISHED, PLEASE HEAD DOWN TO THE STREET.
GOOD-NIGHT, NOW.
YOU KNOW, I CAN'T BELIEVE WE JUST DID THAT. YOU REALIZE THEY'LL PROBABLY LOCK US UP WITH RORSCHACH?
AHH, WHO CARES? WORLD WAR THREE COULD START TOMORROW, RIGHT?
WHO WAS THAT SINGING?
OH, THAT WAS BILLIE HOLIDAY, "YOU'RE MY THR..."
UH, LAURIE, WHAT...?
IT'S OKAY. I THINK I CAUGHT THE TITLE.
26


I THOUGHT YOU'D QUIT, LAURIE.
DANGEROUS HABITS, REMEMBER?
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS QUITTING. JUST SOMETIMES THERE'S A LONGER PAUSE BETWEEN RELAPSES, RIGHT?
UH-HUH.
DAN, WAS TONIGHT GOOD? DID YOU LIKE IT?
DID THE COSTUMES MAKE IT GOOD?
DAN..?
YEAH.
YEAH, I GUESS THE COSTUMES HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT. IT JUST FEELS STRANGE, YOU KNOW? TO COME OUT AND ADMIT THAT TO SOMEBODY.
TO COME OUT OF THE CLOSET.
DOES IT FEEL GOOD?
OH, YES. JESUS, YES.
I FEEL SO CONFIDENT IT'S LIKE I'M ON FIRE. AND ALL THE MASK KILLERS, ALL THE WARS IN THE WORLD, THEY'RE JUST CASES--JUST PROBLEMS TO SOLVE.
HMMM. Y'KNOW, YOU SOUND REAL PASSIONATE. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD SMOLDER.
I'D HOPED TONIGHT MIGHT WAKE SOMETHING INSIDE YOU, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S AWOKEN WITH AN APPETITE.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT HAS A BIG APPETITE.
MMMMM. INSATIABLE, HUH? WELL, I'M OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS. WHAT SHALL WE DO NEXT?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT, AND I FEEL WE HAVE CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS TO OUR FRATERNITY.
I THINK WE SHOULD SPRING RORSCHACH.
WHAT?
I am a brother to dragons,
and a companion to owls.
My skin is black upon me,
and my bones are burned with heat.
JOB chapter 30, verses 29-30
28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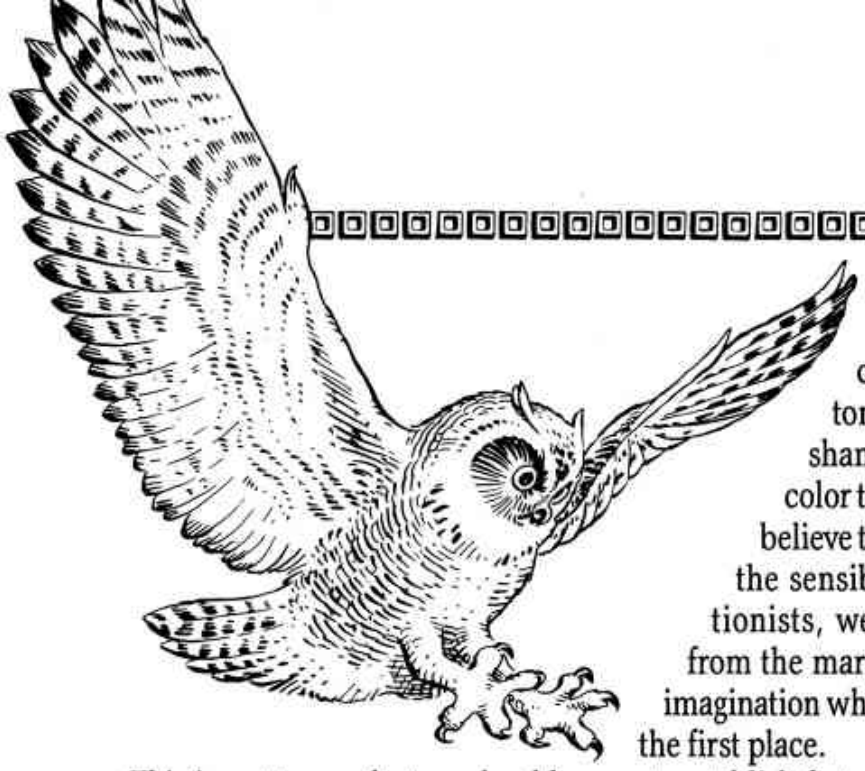
The following text is reprinted from the Journal of The American Ornithological Society, Fall 1983.

BLOOD FROM THE SHOULDER OF PALLAS

BY DANIEL DREIBERG

Is it possible, I wonder, to study a bird so closely, to observe and catalogue its peculiarities in such minute detail, that it becomes invisible? Is it possible that while fastidiously calibrating the span of its wings or the length of its tarsus, we somehow lose sight of its poetry? That in our pedestrian descriptions of a



marbled or vermiculated plumage we forfeit a glimpse of living canvases, cascades of carefully toned browns and golds that would shame Kandinsky, misty explosions of color to rival Monet? I believe that we do. I believe that in approaching our subject with the sensibilities of statisticians and dissectionists, we distance ourselves increasingly from the marvelous and spell-binding planet of imagination whose gravity drew us to our studies in the first place.

This is not to say that we should cease to establish facts and to verify our information, but merely to suggest that unless those facts can be imbued with the flash of poetic insight then they remain dull gems; semi-precious stones scarcely worth the collecting.

When we stare into the catatonic black bead of a Parakeet's eye we must teach ourselves to glimpse the cold, alien madness that Max Ernst perceived when he chose to robe his naked brides in confections of scarlet feather and the transplanted monstrous heads of exotic birds. When some ocean-going Kite or Tern is captured in the sharp blue gaze of our Zeiss lenses, we must be able to see the stop motion flight of sepia gulls through the early kinetic photographs of Muybridge, beating white wings tracing a slow oscilloscope line through space and time.

Looking at a hawk, we see the minute differences in width of the shaft lines on the underfeathers where the Egyptians once saw Horus and the burning eye of holy vengeance incarnate. Until we transform our mere sightings into genuine visions; until our ear is mature enough to order a symphony from the shrill pandemonium of the aviary; until then we may have a hobby, but we shall not have a passion.

When I was a boy, my passion was for owls. During the long summers of the early fifties, while the rest of the country was apparently watching the skies for incoming flying saucers or Soviet missiles, I would hare across the New England fields in the heart of the night, sneakers munching through the dried grass and bracken towards my watch, where I would sit peering upwards in hope of a different sort of spectacle, ears straining for the weird scream that meant an old bird was out combing the dark for sustenance, a mad hermit screech, glaringly distinct from the snoring hiss of a younger owl.

Somewhere over the years; sometime during the yawning expanse between those snug years in the afterglow of a war well won and these current times, huddled in the looming shadow of a war unwinnable; someplace along the line my passion got lost, unwittingly refined from the original gleaming ore down to a banal and lusterless filing system. This gradual tarnishing had gone unnoticed, unchecked, finally calcifying into unthinking habit. It was not until comparatively recently that I managed to catch a dazzling glimpse of the motherlode through the accumulated dust of methodical study and academia: visiting a sick acquaintance at a hospital in Maine on behalf of a mutual friend, walking back across the shadowy parking lot with my mind reduced to blankness by the various concerns of the day, I suddenly and unexpectedly heard the cry of a hunting owl.

It was a bird advanced in years, its shriek that of a deranged old man, wheeling madly through the dark and freezing sky against the ragged night clouds, and the sound halted me in my footsteps. It is a fallacy to suppose that owls screech to startle their prey from hiding, as some have suggested; the cry of the hunting owl is a voice from Hell, and it turns the scrabbling voles to statues, roots the weasel to the soil. In my instant of paralysis there on the glistening macadam, between the sleeping automobiles, I understood the purpose behind the cry with a biting clarity, the way I'd understood it as a boy, belly flat against the warm summer earth. In that extended and timeless moment, I felt the kinship of simple animal fear along with all those other creatures much smaller and more vulnerable than I who had heard the scream as I had heard it, were struck motionless as I was. The owl was not attempting to frighten his food into revealing itself. Perched with disconcerting stillness upon its branch for hours, drinking in the darkness through dilated and thirsty pupils, the owl had already spotted its dinner. The screech served merely to transfix the chosen morsel, pinning it to the ground with a shrill nail of blind, helpless terror. Not knowing which of us had been selected, I stood frozen along with the rodents of the field, my heart hammering as it waited for the sudden clutch of sharpened steel fingers that would provide my first and only indication that I was the predetermined victim. The feathers of owls are soft and downy; they make no sound at all as they drop through the dark stratas of the sky. The silence before an owl swoops is a V-Bomb silence, and you never hear the one that hits you.

Somewhere away in the crepuscular gloom beyond the yellow-lit hospital grounds I thought I heard something small emit its ultimate squeal. The moment had passed. I could move again, along with all the relieved, invisible denizens of the tall grass. We were safe. It wasn't screaming for us, not this time. We could continue with our nocturnal business, with our lives, searching for a meal or a mate. We were not twitching nervelessly in stifling, stinking darkness, head first down the gullet of the swooping horror, our tails dangling pathetically from that vicious scimitar beak for hours before finally our hind legs and pelvic girdle are disgorged, our empty, matted skin curiously inverted by the process.

Although I had recovered my motor abilities in the aftermath of the owl's shriek, I found that my equilibrium was not so easily regained. Some facet of the experience had struck a chord in me, forged a connection between my dulled and jaded adult self and the child who sprawled in faint starlight while the great night hunters staged dramas full of hunger and death in the opaque jet air above me. An urge to experience rather than merely record had been rekindled within me, prompting the thought processes, the self-evaluation that has led to this current article.

As I remarked earlier, this is not to suggest that I immediately foreswore all academic endeavor and research pertaining to the field in order to run away and eke out some naked and primordial existence in the woods. Quite the contrary: I hurled myself into the study of my subject with renewed fervor, able to see the dry facts and arid descriptions in the same transforming magical light that had

favored them when I was younger. A scientific understanding of the beautifully synchronized and articulated motion of an owl's individual feathers during flight does not impede a poetic appreciation of the same phenomenon. Rather, the two enhance each other, a more lyrical eye lending the cold data a romance from which it has long been divorced.

Immersing myself avidly in dusty and long untouched reference books I came across forgotten passages that would make me almost breathless, dreary-looking tomes that would reveal themselves to be treasure houses of iridescent wonder. I rediscovered many long-lost gems amongst the cobwebs, antique and functional stretches of descriptive prose which nonetheless conveyed the violent and terrible essence of their subject matter effortlessly.

I stumbled once more across T.A. Coward's engrossing account on an encounter with an Eagle Owl: "In Norway I saw a bird that had been taken when in down from the nest, but it not only assumed the typical terrifying attitude, but made frequent dashes at the wire, striking with its feet. It puffed its feathers out, framed its head in its wings, and fired off a volley of loud cracks from its snapping beak, but what struck me most was the scintillating flash of its great orange eyes."

Then of course there is Hudson's account of the Magellanic Eagle-Owl which he wounded in Patagonia: "The irides were of a bright orange color, but every time I attempted to approach the bird they kindled into great globes of quivering yellow flame, the black pupils being surrounded by a scintillating crimson light which threw out minute yellow sparks into the air." In long-buried words such as the foregoing I caught some of the searing, apocalyptic intensity that I had felt in that wet hospital parking lot in Maine.

Nowadays, when I observe some specimen of *Carine noctua*, I try to look past the fine grey down on the toes, to see beyond the white spots arranged in neat lines, like a firework display across its brow. Instead, I try to see the bird whose image the Greeks carved into their coins, sitting patiently at the ear of the Goddess Pallas Athene, silently sharing her immortal wisdom.

Perhaps, instead of measuring the feathered tufts surmounting its ears, we should speculate on what those ears may have heard. Perhaps when considering the manner in which it grips its branch, with two toes in front and the reversible outer toe clutching from behind, we should allow ourselves to pause for a moment, and acknowledge that these same claws must once have drawn blood from the shoulder of Pallas.

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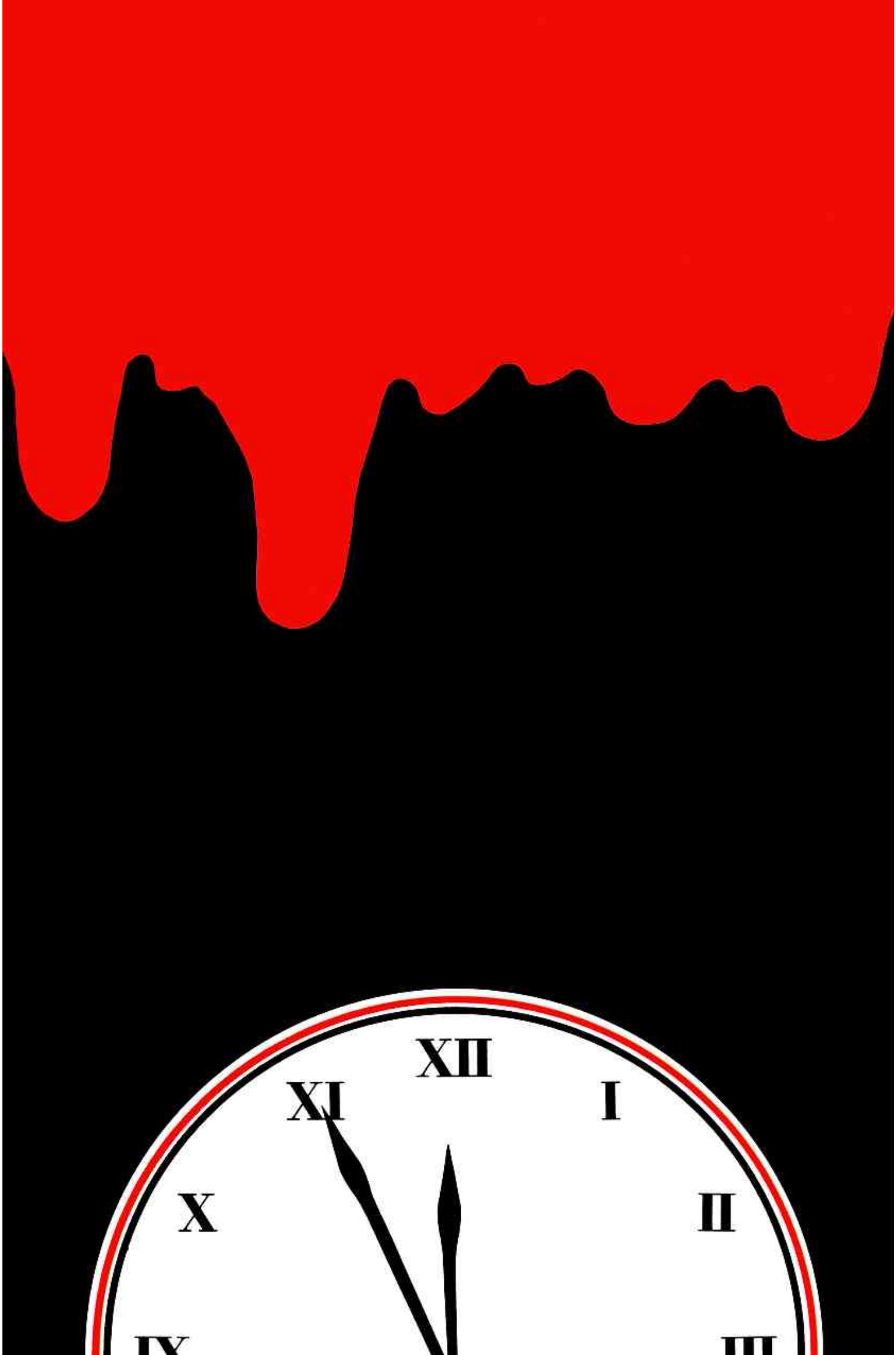
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